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Number 66

December 1989

M-1 Tank Platoon • Dragon Wars • MechWarrior

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

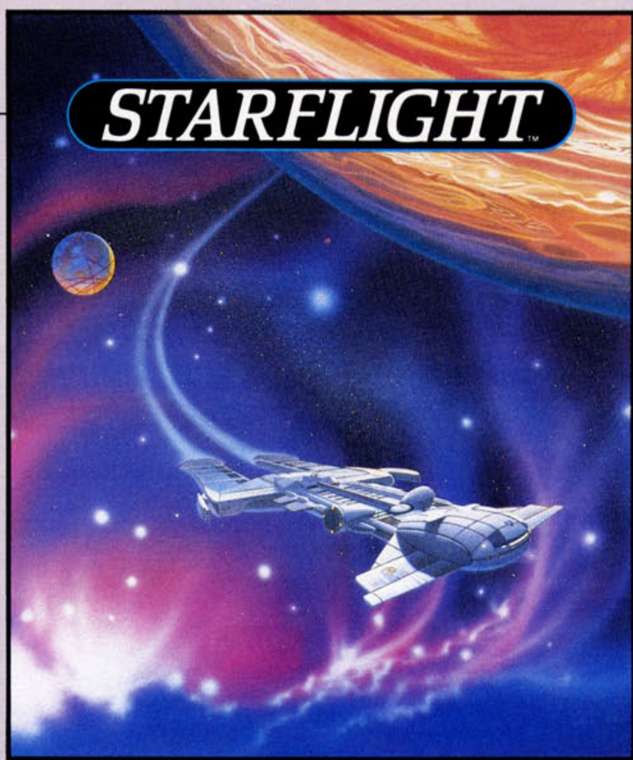


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COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

Covering the World of Computer Games For Nine Years

December 1989 Number 66



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"If I Were To Design A Computer Game" Contest



In CGW #64 (October) we asked you to come up with contest ideas. Well, you did great! We received some excellent suggestions (and some stinkers as well).

Without a doubt the most popular idea (submitted by a number of you) involved variations on the theme "Design a New Computer Game, Not Another Clone". It seems a lot of you are tired of me-too products and want to see some new ideas out there (a few of you listed *SimCity* as an example of a good new idea for a computer game). So this month's contest will involve coming up with the best idea for a new computer game.

However the BEST single idea for a contest came from Patrick Buechner of Washington DC. Patrick's idea was clever and will be fun to judge, but we're going to make you wait a month to see it. Look for Patrick's contest winning contest in the January 1990 issue of CGW. Congratulations Patrick! OK, back to the December Contest.

Contest #2

In 200 words or less, submit your idea for a new computer game. Entries will be judged based on originality; feasibility (i.e. is it possible to produce this game on a personal computer operating with normal configuration standards) and marketability (i.e. a hummingbird feeder simulator may be an original idea, but it would not be marketable). Normal configuration standards for your chosen platform will be assumed to be 640K RAM with EGA graphics for IBM (soundboard, joystick, mouse support optional); 1MB RAM Amiga; 1MB RAM Apple IIgs, 128K Apple II. Entries must be postmarked by January 31, 1990. Winners will be announced in the March 1990 issue. Mail your submissions to:

Computer Gaming World
Contest #2
P.O. Box 4566
Anaheim, CA 92803-4566

The best ideas will printed in CGW. The reader who submits the very best idea will receive a three year subscription to CGW. This is your chance to tell the companies what kind of games you'd like to see for your computer. Enter early, enter often.

A Changing Of The Guard



I am pleased to announce that Johnny Wilson has been promoted to the position of Editor of *Computer Gaming World*. Wilson began his relationship with *CGW* as a writer in 1982. In October 1986 he joined the magazine full time as Associate Editor.

What does this mean to you, the reader? Will there be changes in the way CGW covers the hobby and industry? Will there be major changes to the format of CGW as a result of this move? No, on both accounts. The reason being that the current direction and format of CGW is already as much Wilson's vision of the magazine as it is mine.

This promotion is, in reality, giving credit where credit is due. As my publisher responsibilities have increased over the past 18 months, by necessity Johnny's responsibilities and authority have grown so that he is now functioning as Editor just as I have been functioning as Publisher and Editor-in-Chief. It is time to formalize what has become a reality.

CGW has gained an unparalleled level of respect and trust in this industry. This is due in no small part to Johnny's untiring efforts in news gathering and accurate analysis which has served not only you the reader, but the whole industry as well. We have always sought, and I believe with some success, to be not only a consumer review magazine, but also a trade style publication that reports on the industry itself. That is why CGW attracts a readership that tends to be upscale and mature (average income $30,000; average age 29.5 years). We believe you want more than just the reviews. You want the inside information on the games, the people, and the companies.

Speaking of inside information, that is where Johnny excels. When he became Associate Editor he was quite timid about calling the companies and seeking information (I can hear a number of Press Relations people gasping in disbelief). It's true! But he has learned. These days when a PR person gets the message that Johnny is on the line, she/he is likely to ask themselves "What's going on in my company NOW that I don't know about!?"

One of my favorite stories concerning Johnny's ability to get inside information involves the PR person who, after just leaving a meeting in which she learned of a new title her company was going to develop, picked up the latest copy of CGW. Intending to check out Rumor Bag and see what the competition was doing, she read that her company was planning to release the game discussed in the meeting. In another memorable story, a company CEO was polling company investors to see who might have leaked a story printed in CGW, only to discover that he had given us the information himself.

So, what can you expect from CGW now? Just what you have come to expect from us already: the most accurate coverage of the games and the industry to be found anywhere (and nearly always the first to press with that coverage).

Congratulations Johnny! Now, I'm taking a few weeks off. Here are the keys, don't forget to put out the trash.

Russell Sipe
Publisher and Editor in Chief

DESK TOP STUFFING.



Konami is cooking now, with a hot computer game that gives you complete control of world championship caliber basketball, featuring Chicago, New York, Boston and LA.

From the opening tip, it's 5 on 5, full court, board crashing action, highlighted by blocks, steals, picks,



foul shots, 3 point bombs and 3 kinds of slams — the Gorilla, the Rim Rockin' Reverse and the In-Your-Face Jam!

Two can play at this game, or you can challenge the computer. Either way, it'll take all the runnin' and gunnin' you can muster if you hope to savor the taste of victory.

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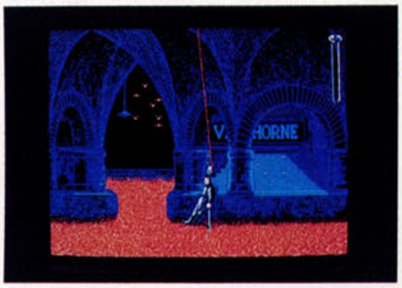
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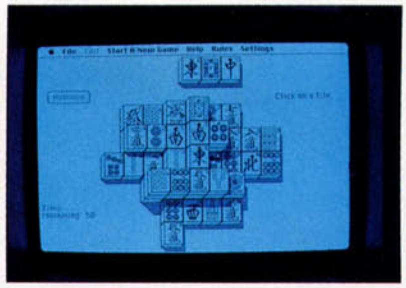
Bar Games



The Cycles



Ghostbusters II



Shanghai



Tongue of the Fatman



APBA Pro Bowling

THE MUSCLE CARS: The Duel: Test Drive II Car Disk: This new data disk (you need *The Duel: Test Drive II* to play) provides the player with the powerful, muscle cars of the sixties. Cars include the 1963 Corvette Sting Ray, 1968 Shelby GT500 Cobra, the 1967 GTO, the 1969 COPO 9560 ZL-1 Camaro, and the 1969 Dodge Charger Daytona. IBM ($19.95). Circle Reader Service #3.

Activision
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GHOSTBUSTERS II: Players take control of each of the Ghostbusters as they try to fry the ghostly Scoleri Brothers, scoop up slime from beneath the Van Horne Station, escape from Parkview Asylum, and launch Miss Liberty on a rescue mission through the streets of New York. It's a dirty job . . . IBM ($44.95). Circle Reader Service #4.

TONGUE OF THE FATMAN: It's alien fight night and you're the fresh meat in this sock'em up action game. Players must duke it out with several arena-hardened aliens on their way to the ultimate title fight with Mondo the Fatman. Players attack with the usual assortment of fighting moves, but they

(Continued on page 66)

Advertisers



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See Official Rules for details.

The Rumor Bag

by Jean Jacques Voltaire



Montreal is probably best known for good food, beautiful mademoiselles, and excellent hockey. I was enjoying some of the Old World cuisine, flirting with an enchanting bi-lingual waitress and planning to see the *Montreal Canadiens* hockey club play the *Boston Bruins* after dinner. I noticed the president of an entertainment software firm and one of his investors entering the crowded restaurant and couldn't resist the temptation to play a diabolical prank on them. Calling to my waitress in my horrendously broken French, I motioned her to my table and whispered my plan into her ear.

The idea was that she would speak only French while serving the executive and would pass along to me, preferably in English, any rumors she happened to overhear. It was foolproof (I got the rumors, didn't I?). After the salad course, she told me that **Interplay** has signed a licensing deal to produce the first computer role-playing game based on the *Lord of the Rings*. There have been adventure games and adventure/strategy games, but this is the first licensed Tolkien CRPG. She even overheard a great story about the fact that *Dragon Wars* was held up more than a week as the programmers chased down one particular bug. They found it after viewing hours of videotape showing the playtesters at work. The "bug" was in the code involving a magic spell called, appropriately enough, "Insect Plague".

By the time the main course arrived, the executive had already marinated his filet mignon with a rumor that **Virgin Mastertronic U.K.** has acquired the rights to publish *Monty Python: The Game*. Alas, the US division hasn't yet decided whether to publish it over here or not. He also said that their "Medieval Football" game, expected in the summer of 1990, would probably be entitled, *Knight Time Football*.

Other tidbits about European games accompanied the chocolate truffles and coffee. **Data East** apparently plans to publish *The Untouchables*, an action game originally published overseas by **Ocean**, and **Accolade** plans to publish a refined version of *Fighter Bomber*, based on the European version published by **Activision U.K.**

As the two businessmen started to leave, I greeted them warmly in English. They turned toward me and one said, "I'm glad someone in here speaks English. I'm going to have to learn to speak French." I introduced our mutual waitress and asked her to say something in English to them. She shook her finger at me and said, "Oh, you're so-oo-oo awful!" The businessmen thought so, too, so I tried to make up for the prank by offering them a rumor. **Panther Games**, the Australian publisher of *Fire Brigade* is running late in releasing *Fulda Gap*, a new approach to the hypothetical Central European battle between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces. The reason? They are creating a development system for an entire series of modern military simulations, to be called the *Flash Point* series. Most people thought they were going to use the *Fire Brigade* system for *Fulda Gap*, but it's going to be more user-friendly.

We all left the restaurant in a jovial mood and as I tried to flag down a taxi, his investor gave me a business card with some news about **Electronic Arts Distribution** scribbled on the back. **EAD** will now distribute personal computer versions of **Sega Software**'s *Altered Beast, Crackdown, Golden Axe,* and *Turbo Outrun*, while **Mindscape** will continue to market *Shinobi, After Burner* and the earlier titles.

On the way to the Forum, the cabbie asked me if I already had my ticket. I said I didn't and he dropped me off on "Scalper's Row" (a popular sidewalk near the Forum). I was immediately intercepted by an enterprising sidewalk salesman who wanted $100 per seat. I hesitated, so he looked nervously from side to side and said, "Look, I'll make it $80 if you can give me a rumor they haven't heard at my local software store." I didn't ask how he knew I was the "Rumor Bag" guy (even painted in "The Canadien's" familiar red, white and blue, the bag over my head is a dead giveaway). I simply told him **Psygnosis** was preparing the ultimate "TV game show" simulation. Entitled *The Killing Game Show*, it will feature hi-tech combat between all sorts of organic and robotic lifeforms in arenas shaped like ancient temples, organic materials, and mysterious caverns. So, he sold me a ticket and still made a healthy profit.

At the game, I loved the bi-lingual scoreboard. Glenn Wesley was called for "hooking" and they broadcast some neat animation out of the French word, "accrocher". A Quebecois sitting next to me said something that translates, "Stephan LeBeau hasn't been hooked like that since he played *SimCity* on his computer." The large fellow in front of him turned around and spouted a torrent of French at him which took a moment for me to understand. The large gentleman was telling him about *SimEarth*. He'd heard that the new game uses Gaia theory (particularly the work of scientists like James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis), an interdisciplinary approach to the ways geology, biology, and anthropology connect. He says the designers are trying to do some different climate modeling and are experimenting with different time scales (all the way from geologic eras to the fast-moving ways humans mess up the planet).

"Speaking of ecological contamination," I piped up. "A new crew called **Aftershock Entertainment** sent me an advanced copy of *Space Waste*, a fast-moving arcade game with gorgeous VGA graphics that should be published in December by **Microillusions**."

They said they would watch for it, but they were really more interested in sports games and simulators, so I told them about **Electronic Arts**' upcoming PGA (Professional Golf Association) licensed product. At least, I told them there was going to be one. I didn't have a lot of details.

Suddenly, the Montreal goalie (Patrick Roy) made a spectacular save. The scoreboard lit up with a pun on the French word for unbelievable—incROYable. In turn, the fellow next to me said, "You're not going to believe what **SSI**'s new flight simulator is going to be." He told me that it would be called *DragonStrike* and would be a dragon flight/combat simulator.

"Are you sure that's not a lot of hot air?" I quipped in my best French. Ducking a left hook, I now know that I either need to improve my French, learn more about the Quebecois sense of humor, or get padding for my bag. Unbelievable! **CGW**

Bard's Tale™ Fans Rejoice!

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Inside the Industry

News, Notes and Quotes From the Computer Entertainment Industry

Epyx Files For "Chapter 11" Bankruptcy

On October 19, 1989, **Epyx** filed for protection from creditors under Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Laws. The hearing is scheduled for December 12, 1989. Informed sources suggest that the move would be a prudent step, since the company should have a pretty fair income stream beginning in a few months and needs temporary protection from its creditors in order to recover. However, some **Epyx** shareholders have alleged that the company notified them that the most recently scheduled stockholders' meeting had been canceled and then, held a secret meeting. *CGW* was unable to reach a company spokesperson because the **Epyx** phone line was disconnected.

Sierra Shows 13th Straight Quarter of Revenue Growth

In an entirely different vein, **Sierra On-Line, Inc.** reported on October 26, 1989 that it had just completed its thirteenth consecutive quarter with increases in revenue (+ $1,854,000 or 33.25%) and earnings (+ $138,000 or 17.5%). The increase of $.05 in earnings per share (+ 20%) is significant in that there was almost a full million more shares outstanding during the latest quarter than in the previous year's quarter. The increase itself is even more significant in that **Sierra**'s joint promotion with IBM delayed several significant revenue-producing projects.

Sierra President and CEO Ken Williams has stated that the delay is over and the company is "... once again concentrating on both our new products and existing line." In a recent conversation with *CGW*, Williams suggested that the company may be experimenting with higher density disk storage during 1990 in order to accommodate more data for improved graphics and sound. Informed sources indicate that further advances in graphics are due toward the middle of 1990, but no official statement has been made. The higher than expected earnings in the second fiscal quarter should pave the way toward these technological advances in the **Sierra** product line.

Strategic Simulations, Inc. Signs New License



Strategic Simulations, Inc. just signed a licensing agreement with **FASA Corporation** to produce a line of products based on the "Renegade Legion" series of game products. The first product will be *Interceptor*, ship-to-ship combat in outer space. Projected release date is mid-1990.

Long Awaited "Harpoon" Nears Arrival

At press time, *CGW* received a playable copy of *Harpoon*, the long-awaited game of modern naval combat from **Three-Sixty Pacific**. The game was still undergoing a rigorous debugging process, but the promise of a design which would offer a detailed strategic conflict for the grognard and an accessible game for the casual gamer or novice seems to be fulfilled. The detailed database, with commentary by naval warfare expert and best-selling novelist Larry Bond, really exists. The windows-style screen with strategic map, group display and unit detail is functional. In addition, the game offers the versatility to play either NATO or Warsaw Pact sides; utilize possible nuclear disposition; use snorkeling Soviet subs; choose realistic weather; opt for realistic or user-friendly maintenance failure levels; and decide whether to have full ordnance initially available.

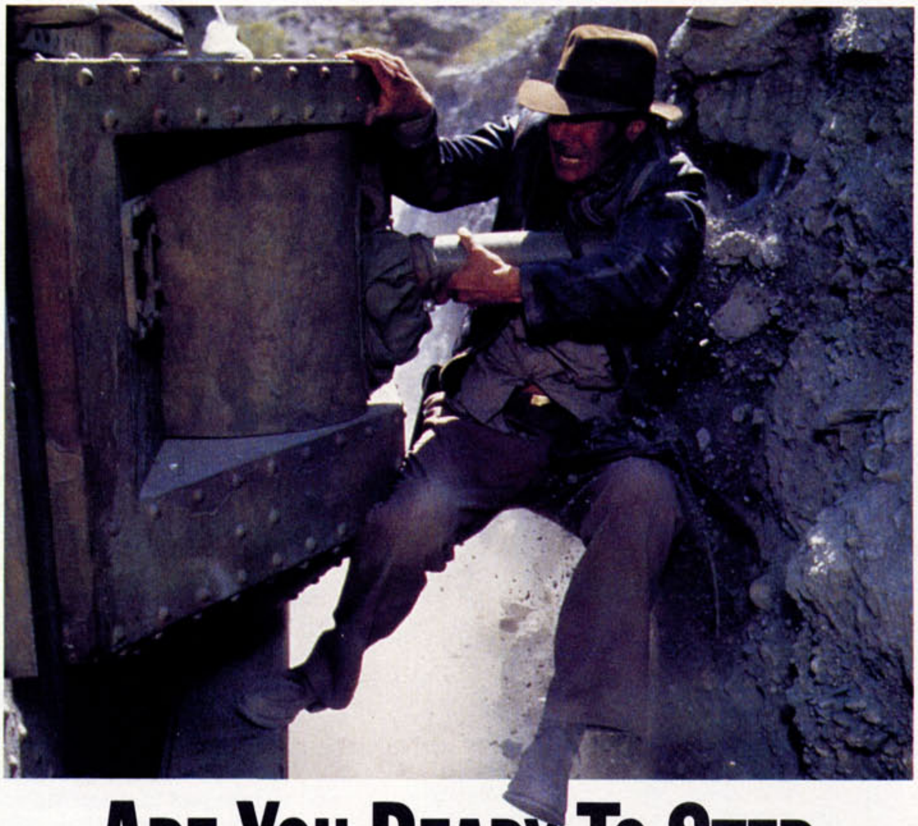




Mediagenic Refocuses On Entertainment

Mediagenic has announced plans to divest itself of its two company owned Presentation Tool Publishers in order to concentrate on entertainment products. **TenpointO**, publishers of *Focal Point II* and *Open It!*, and **Activision Presentation Tools**, publishers of *Reports, Business Class, Paintworks Plus, Paintworks Gold*, and others, are the two product lines affected. **Mediagenic** will continue to market the products already developed, but no further research or development is expected.

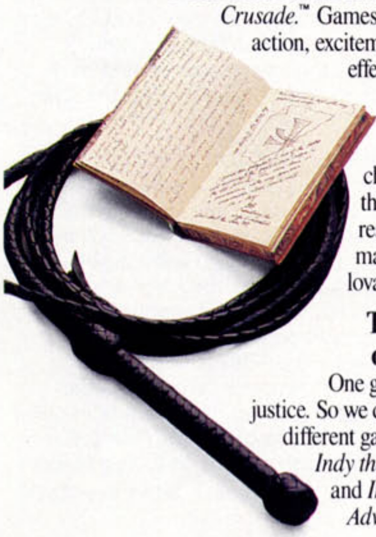
Currently, **Mediagenic** is optimistic about its entertainment products: *Ghostbusters II, MechWarrior, Shanghai, Grave Yardage* and others. Further, Davis told *CGW* that the company expects to continue to be supportive of CD-ROM products. *Manhole* was the first ever and *Cosmic Osmo (CD-ROM)* will be prominently featured at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show . Davis also believes the company's new "Gametalk" system, as well as a new **Infocom** title to be announced in January that may reposition the brand name, will offer unique contributions to the market. Asked if the company will be moving toward entertainment products in a "Windows" environment to take advantage of future multimedia products, Davis simply asked if *CGW* thought there were "Windows" of opportunity in the MS-DOS world. Without confirming any specific "Windows" products, Davis pointed out **Mediagenic**'s investment in **ZSoft** software and noted that with Atlanta-based **ZSoft**'s expertise, **Mediagenic** will have "Windows"-based multimedia products whenever there is a platform. Also, Davis' statement in the divestiture announcement said that **ZSoft** would *not* be affected by the plan. "Its [**ZSoft**'s] high-end IBM/compatible graphics and output device support orientation have considerable strategic value to our organization."



ARE YOU READY TO STEP INTO INDY'S SHOES?

Move larger-than-life exploits from the movie screen to the computer screen, and the results are often small potatoes.

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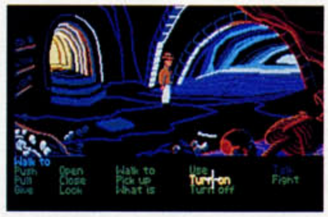
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In *Indy the Graphic Adventure*, you'll find out if you can keep up with the guy with the whip and the hat. Maybe you'll make the same decisions *Indy* made in the movie. Or score higher I.Q. (*Indy Quotient*) points by finding subtle or ingenious alternatives. All the while exploring a stunning world of sights, sounds and characters—many of which you didn't see in the film.

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Knocking Nazis off precarious Zeppelin catwalks is all in a day's work in ***Indy the Action Game.***



The trail to the Grail is strewn with rats, skeletons, and much, much worse in ***Indy the Graphic Adventure.***

We made a spectacle of ourselves.

Both games bring you the great graphics, exciting camera angles, and stirring sound tracks that made the *Indiana Jones* films so special.

Of course, our development team had the advantage of working with the people who made the movie. And that's how we made sure that when you step into Indy's shoes, your feet are planted firmly in the fire.

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Action game available for Commodore 64, IBM, Atari ST and Amiga. Graphic Adventure available for IBM (includes AdLib™ sound card support), Amiga, and Atari ST.

Over There

Of Gods and Gremlins





Populous' Block Land



Scapeghost



Bomber



Hound of Shadow

European Computer Role-Playing

Here is the latest information on European Christmas game releases. Mention of availability refers to the UK market, however they can be obtained via those addresses listed last month.

The data disk, available now, for the ever-popular *Populous* has finally arrived on a dual format ST/Amiga disk. Five new worlds are included: Silly Land, Wild West, Revolution Francaise, Block Land (seen in the screenshot), and Bit Plains. **Electronic Arts** says that each land is tougher to complete than its predecessor and that previous strategies, used with the original scenarios, may not be the best to complete the game. The price of the data disk is half of the original game.

Developed by **Eldritch Games**, for **Electronic Arts**, *Hound Of Shadow* is a combination of (solo) RPG and a text/graphic adventure—a concept developed by **Infocom** with *Journey*. *Hound Of Shadow* (a pre-Christmas release) is based in the Oxford Street/Soho area of the 1920s, the plot owing a great deal to the H.P. Lovecraft style of horror story. The RPG aspect of the game uses **Eldritch**'s "Timeline" system. After answering some questions at the beginning of the game and selecting a relevant profession (which will govern which skills your character will be most adept at), the computer generates a set of statistics according to your answers (shades of *Ultima IV*). The RPG-type introduction then gives way to an, apparently, standard text/graphic adventure but with puzzles relying more on character interaction rather than object manipulation. In addition, the graphics are black and white/sepia which enhances the atmosphere.

Both of the UK's top adventure houses may have produced their last standard text/graphic adventure. Level 9 (Knight Orc, Lancelot, etc) have announced that their forthcoming adventure, *Scapeghost* (all formats, pre-Christmas launch), will be their last because, according to Level 9's Pete Austin (one of three brothers who all take part in designing and programming), "People have been declaring the death of the adventure market for years, so Scapeghost is an appropriate final release. It comes from beyond the grave and you play a ghost."

As an ex-cop who knew too much; was efficiently disposed of; and framed for a number of crimes he didn't commit, you return, in spectral form, with the dual aim of clearing your name and seeking revenge upon the villains. **Level 9** is now concentrating upon the new H.U.G.E. system (wHolly Universal Games Engine) which is more arcade-oriented and may possibly end up in something of the *Zak McKracken* mold.

Magnetic Scrolls' (*Guild of Thieves, The Pawn,* etc) position is open to speculation. However, they are reported to be developing a system which will take them away from standard adventures. If this is so, *Myth* will be their last adventure. *Myth* (all formats, available now) is a mini-adventure which was developed specifically for the "Official Secrets" club (more later). It revolves around a rather inept Poseidon, a god of the sea who cannot swim. As he says himself, "Have you any idea how difficult it is to look god-like

(Continued on page 101)

CARRIER™ COMMAND



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Forget about relaxing. With 64 islands to capture, you'll barely have time to blink. Especially since a powerful enemy needs the islands' rich energy reserves as desperately as you do.

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And you can't sleep late when the free world is counting on you to lace all 64 islands into a mining, manufacturing and supply complex to ease a global energy crisis. The sooner the better.

As a matter of fact, so much is happening so fast in Carrier Command that it's really two games in one. Strategy + Action. And you can choose which aspect of the game you want to emphasize each time you play.

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Circle Reader Service #41



Screens may vary

Steve went to the hospital for minor surgery. He left with major problems.

Sleeping is supposed to be the easiest part of going under the knife. But not for Steve. His dreams are trying to kill him.

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Coming soon for IBM-PC/Tandy/compatibles, C-64, Amiga, and Atari ST. Can't find Weird Dreams? Call (301) 771-1151 x208 weekdays 8:30 am - 5:30 pm EST. © 1989 MicroProse Software, Inc. © 1987 Best Ever Games Company. Co-conception: Herman Serrano and Tony King. Co-design: Herman Serrano, James Hutchby and Tony King.

Circle Reader Service #38

Stunt Track RACER™

8 WONDERS OF THE RACING WORLD

1.

THE HUMP BACK.

Lots of little bumps that take their toll. Chassis damage adds up quickly.



2.

THE LITTLE RAMP.

Looks easy enough. The ramp isn't too big. But everyone wants to clear it full speed. They end up kissing dirt 100 feet down.



3.

THE STEPPING STONES.

Speed control is the name of the game — not too fast, not too slow. You'll have to clear four chasms, one after the other.



4.

THE BIG RAMP.

Build up speed for that ramp, but be ready for the landing. It'll rattle your molars. Your chassis can fall apart quickly on this one.



5.

THE HIGH JUMP.

Clearing the ramp is easy. Making it over that monstrosity in the middle is another story.



6.

THE ROLLERCOASTER.

The ride is silky smooth until you hit that slight dip in the road — all 500 feet of it.



7.

THE SKI JUMP.

For elite racers only. Handle this course right, and you're a legend. One small mistake, you're in orbit.



8.

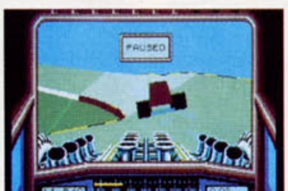
THE DRAWBRIDGE.

This one *moves.* Catching the drawbridge at the right angle requires perfect timing. Better get it right. Second chances are for the living.



They're the meanest speedways ever designed. Like rollercoasters from Hell, they twist and climb through empty space without tracks to guide your wheels. Or guard rails to save your neck. In some sections, they don't even have roadway to carry your weight.

Your super-charged car is like a plane without wings. You have only momentum — the perfect combination of speed and steering — to carry you safely across gaping holes in the track. Airborne,



you hold on, only hoping that all four tires find the track again — and that the jolt won't be too much for you and your car to handle.

Fast-scrolling screens are so vivid they do everything but blow wind in your face. When the track rises and drops sharply away, the illusion of weightlessness runs straight to your gut. On hairpin turns, you'll find yourself leaning in your chair.

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Circle Reader Service #39

Interplay's "Dragon Wars"

by Scorpia

Purgatory stinks. It reeks of the dead and dying among filth-choked streets, decaying buildings, and open-air cesspools. Few survive for long in this noisome parody of a city and those who do quickly lose what humanity they once had. They go mad or prey on the weaker inhabitants, always on the lookout for new blood to bully, beat, or rob. This time, the new blood is you, dumped naked and unarmed into a hell on earth from which, so it's said, there is no escape but death . . .



So begins *Dragon Wars*, the latest role-playing game from **Interplay**. No party of adventurers has ever started out in a more unpleasant, hostile environment with so little, which is exactly nothing. No armor, no weapons, no money, no spells. "Nada", as they say on the west coast. It's a chilling thought. Yet, despite the depressing prospects, there is hope. Your situation is far from impossible. For the clever, the brave, and yes, the desperate, there are ways out of this city of the damned, and not necessarily feet first. It all depends on the risks you're willing to take, and how good your party of four is with various skills. The characters who come with the game are a good bet. They form a well-balanced group (although you may want to change their names) and the necessary skills are well-distributed among them. These aren't just demo characters to get you started. They are seriously constructed and carefully planned out personas who are capable of finishing the adventure.

TITLE:	Dragon Wars
SYSTEM:	Apple II (with 128K)
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNERS:	Paul Ryan O'Connor & Brian Fargo
PUBLISHER:	Interplay Productions Costa Mesa, CA





Of course, you may feel happier creating your very own people, instead of using the pre-generated bunch. This is fine, but before doing that, study the others very carefully. Note what skills each one comes with. All of them have a purpose, and some are critical to success in the game. Each new character begins with no skills, and attributes of 10. You have 50 points with which to "buy" attribute increases and skills, not necessarily on a one-for-one basis. How you allocate these points is up to you, but once you're finished, there is no going back to undo something (unless you want to delete the character and start again).

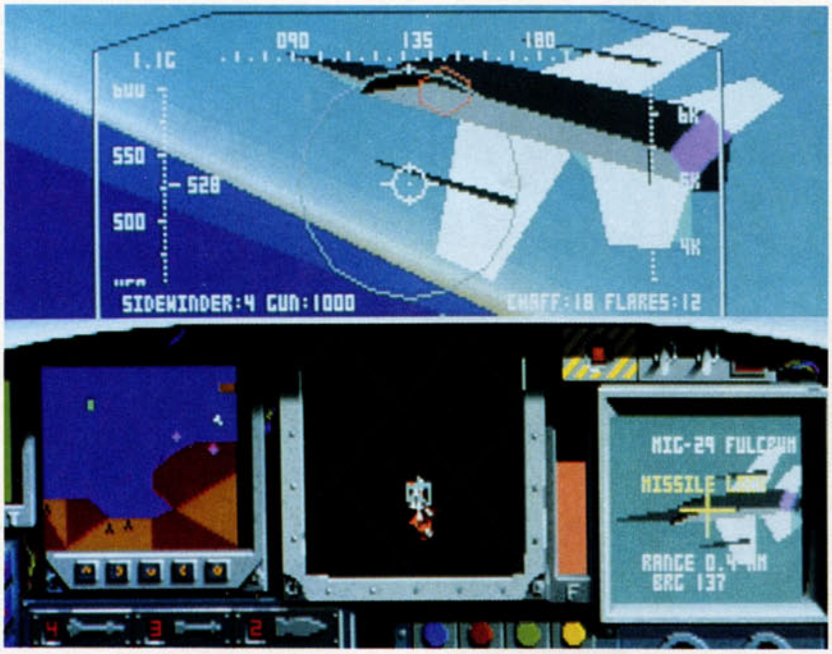
Your third option is to bring over one or more characters from any of the three *Bard's Tale* games. Don't do it! You won't like the results. Regardless of level, they all come over with physical stats of 16, a couple of skills, and 10 points for skill or attribute increases. This is less than it sounds, especially if the characters transfer with a high level. For mages in particular, this is a problem, as it costs 10 points for each Magic skill beyond Low Magic. The character eats up the points right there, with nothing left over. Since you can expect to finish the game with characters somewhere between 8th and 10th level on average, you see where the problem lies in starting with high-level ones. Their advancement will be very slow, and the precious points gained on level increase (see below) will be few and far between. The only time you might come out ahead with a transferred character is to bring over a low-level fighter. It simply isn't worth bringing over a mage. Overall, you will do better starting with a brand-new group.

Every time a character reaches a new level, he or she receives 2 more points to put into skills or attributes. These points can be used immediately or held onto while you decide where they should go. Level itself does not confer any benefits in combat or spell-casting. It is just a way of marking when you can increase the abilities of the characters. Once you're satisfied with your characters, they are set down in the middle of Purgatory and the game begins. There are many unpleasant people and critters roaming the streets and alleys. Confrontations will be frequent. In a Certain Other Series (heh), this would spell instant doom and aggravation. However, that is not the case here. You don't have to fight unless you really want to (and, at the beginning, you certainly don't!), since all opponents start far enough from the group to allow everyone to run away safely. Expect to do a lot of running as you explore the city. There is, of course, only

(Continued on page 89)

Circle Reader Service #40 »

Introducing F-15 Strike Eagle II. The explosive sequel to the best-seller.

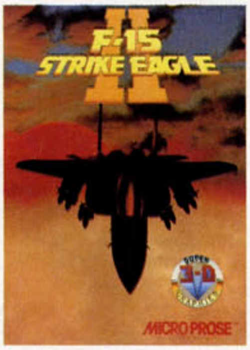




F-15 Strike Eagle II is here. And it's non-stop action all the way.

The sequel to F-15 Strike Eagle, the original jet combat game that sold a million copies, F-15 Strike Eagle II combines intense air-to-air combat with the newest breakthroughs in MicroProse game design.

An intelligent combat console lets you engage the enemy with the touch of just one button. And the optional "Director" mode automatically selects your best camera angle. So you can concentrate on the action: scorching dogfights with bogies that swarm the sky!



And all the choices are yours. F-15 Strike Eagle II has four levels of difficulty, take-off and landing options, a no-crash mode for novice pilots, even a built-in combat training demo.

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Zoom over 250,000 miles of authentic terrain in real world battle zones!

Constantly changing landmarks—fly over buildings, bridges, mountains, SAM sites, cities, shipyards and more!

Four levels of difficulty to challenge every gamer!

Training demo and practice runs for new pilots!

Target enemy planes with the touch of a button!

But think fast—your enemy is as smart as you are!

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MICROPROSE™
Just For Fun.

Trading Spaces

Electronic Arts' "Starflight 2"

by Chris Lombardi



Somewhere near the Wee Dipper, aboard the starship, Ruptured Duck - "Captain, we have an alien vessel approaching from X1,Y2." the Thrynn navigator hummed in his insect-like buzz. Looking up from another losing chess match with the engineering droid, the captain slowly tuned into this existence, "Huh? Oh...ah, steer clear and open communications. If it's those preachy Tandelou come to convert us again, I'll scream."

When the captain swung around to face the com-screen the Dweenle medic was slouching before him. "Uh, excuse me captain, I know I'm bothering you again and you hate me for it but, I was wondering if you could avoid combat as it makes me very nauseous. Of course, you probably don't care."

"Duodenum, relax a bit, alright? I hate getting shot at as much as you do," he said, wondering if therapy was being wasted on this hopelessly insecure crewmember.

"What! Hate combat?! Combat is life! Life is combat! Captain, I suggest we attack at once!" screamed the G'nunk.

"Oh God, who woke her up?", muttered the Captain.

"Captain they're not responding to our hail. We are under fire" said Gabby the Elowyn with a nervous rustle of her leafy bouffant hair-do.

"Crap! Sasha, raise shields, arm weapons, and steer clear of those plasma bolts . . .Sasha? . . . Sasha!" Looking back, the captain could see Sasha taking another whiff on the Gas Slug. "Alright! The Gas Slug's off limits until we return to starbase!"

Sasha slowly emerged from the Gas Slug's euphoria and swung the ship around, just avoiding a plasma bolt and managing with some difficulty to lock the lasers on the enemy flagship.

Just then, the Dweenle lost control and proceeded to lose his lunch on the communications console. The Captain suddenly realized that, throughout his explorations, he had never seen anything more disgusting than regurgitated Nid Berries.

The chaotic situations, crisis upon crisis, the distinctive alien cultures and the creative spark inherent in the introductory fiction are all present in *Starflight 2: The Trade Routes of the Cloud Nebula* (*SF2*). *SF2* is a sequel to *CGW*'s Hall of Fame member, *Starflight*. Akin to Lucas' original vision of the *Star Wars* trilogy, *Starflight* had a significantly longer story from the outset than could ever possibly be fit into one product. *SF2* is just as stimulating as the original.

History of the Galaxy: Part II

Those who have played *Starflight* may remember the Spemin, an egocentric and hostile (yet technologically impotent) race of slime bags (literally). Well, it seems the Spemin have gone off and discovered some bite for their bark. Once just a dangerous nuisance, the Spemin now have powerful new weaponry and an endless supply of the valuable Shyneum fuel. They have issued an ultimatum (actually it's the fourth) demanding the immediate surrender of all the peoples of Arth. The Arthlings have not complied to these demands, knowing how spineless (literally *and* figuratively) the Spemin actually are. The fear is that the Spemin are gaining more courage with each 'ultimatum' and may attack soon. The player's mission is to: 1) find the source of Shyneum and 2) obtain the Spemin technology.

Achieving the game's objectives is a matter of exploration. As in *Starflight*, there is plenty of it. The "tiny nibble of universe" to be explored in the game consists of approximately 150 star systems, each with anywhere from zero to eight planets in orbit. Inhabiting many of these systems are 25 races of lifeforms, six of which are space-faring. There is enough here to keep players busy for a long time.

This grand adventure begins at Starport where players create their crewmembers and outfit the ship. In creating a crew, one chooses between the same five races used in *Starflight*: Humans, Velox, Thrynn, Elowan, and Androids. Each race still has different strengths and weaknesses and creating a balanced crew is still important. One also needs to outfit the ship, though the initial funds available to upgrade it won't buy much. One would think Interstel (no relation to the computer game publisher located in Webster, TX) could manage a bit more, seeing that the goal is to save their skins. But alas, that would leave out a very large part of the adventure.

Before venturing forth to save the free world, players need to max-out their crew's abilities and bolster their ship's

(Continued on page 20)


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(Continued from page 18)

Starflight 2

capabilities. This requires a good deal of cash. Fortunately, there are several ways to earn it. The easiest and quickest way to earn dough is to trade goods between the sentient races in the general vicinity of Starbase. Each race buys and sells certain common items, depending on their technology level, as well as specialty items that are unique to that race. The specialty items have a much higher profit margin than the common goods but there is usual only one buyer and seller.

Another less profitable and more time consuming occupation is the selling of life-forms found on certain habitable planets. Some of these life-forms can bring in some healthy dough but unfortunately these tend to be the more dangerous species that have the tendency to attack and injure crew members. Capturing these creatures requires stunning them with the terrain vehicle's laser. (**Hint:** A good navigator is a must when on these safaris as he's the one who fires the gun.)

Mining minerals can also provide a nice supplementary income, but it too has its drawbacks. The upper elevations, where the highest concentrations of minerals can be found, are often the site of foul weather that can injure your crew. Getting caught in an electrical storm 40 klicks from your ship can be a disaster. At any rate, mining can be a good way to pick up a little cash if you're down on fuel.

"It's Got Personality!"

Solving the game's objectives is also a matter of information gathering. Most information will come from interaction with the half dozen spacefaring sentients. The personalities of these beings, created for the most part by Greg Johnson, are one of the strongest elements of the game. The Dweenle, a depressive, submissive, borderline suicidal race of the coreward, upspin arm of the galaxy, are such a drag to talk to that I personally found myself dreading encounters with them. Also, I had to feel a tad of contempt for the closed-minded, pretentious religiosity of the Eschavara and Eschevoy Tandelou, who happen to be in a bitter battle over the theology surrounding *seven* (count 'em!) ceremonial practices out of 800,000 in the Thdok-bryg-ahhh religion. These caricatures are wonderful and the game would not be half as good without the color that they provide.



An orbital screen showing a planetary scan.



A viewscreen showing the ship in interstellar travel mode.

Unfortunately, not all encounters are enriching ones, since a few races would just as soon vaporize one's crew as chat with them. Fortunately, combat is not a major aspect of the game, a refreshing change for the CRPG fan. The combat system is very simple. Once combat is selected from the Navigator's menu, the ship can be maneuvered by means of the keyboard and weapons fired with the space bar. The computer chooses the target and type of weapon (laser or torpedo). Then, the captain's job is simply to steer out of trouble and fire at will. Captains can also purchase "blasto pods", extremely effective weapons that annihilate all in their explosive wake. Effective indeed!

The game interface has not changed much from the original game. It is menu-driven, using the arrow keys and the spacebar to select one's choices. It can be a little clumsy at first but you soon memorize common key sequences and become accustomed to it. Flipping though the ship's inventory can be irritating. The scrolling is slow and, once an item is selected, it resets to the beginning of the list and the player must scroll through the entire inventory again. While the interface is under discussion, the save game procedure should be criticized. The only way to save more than one game position is to use a utility and make a copy of the current save. Should the entire crew be destroyed, the game is over and one must rename these files and restart. This was a conscious design decision that was meant to create more realistic play, and avoid what some call 'unethical gaming' (saving after every advancement and rebooting after every error). Despite the supporting ideology, it is actually a pain.

Let's be honest. We don't play these games for the realistic frustration of defeat. We play them for the exhilaration of success.

The game's graphics are very strong, and in many ways improved over the original game. The planetary landing sequence is especially nice. When orbiting a planet a full view of the rotating globe is shown. Upon choosing to land, a flat topographical map appears with land form elevations represented by varying colors. After choosing the landing site, the planet begins to grow larger until a topographical net is locked-on to the actual landing site. These sequences, which are unique to each planet, were creating using fractal graphic routines created by T.C. Lee.

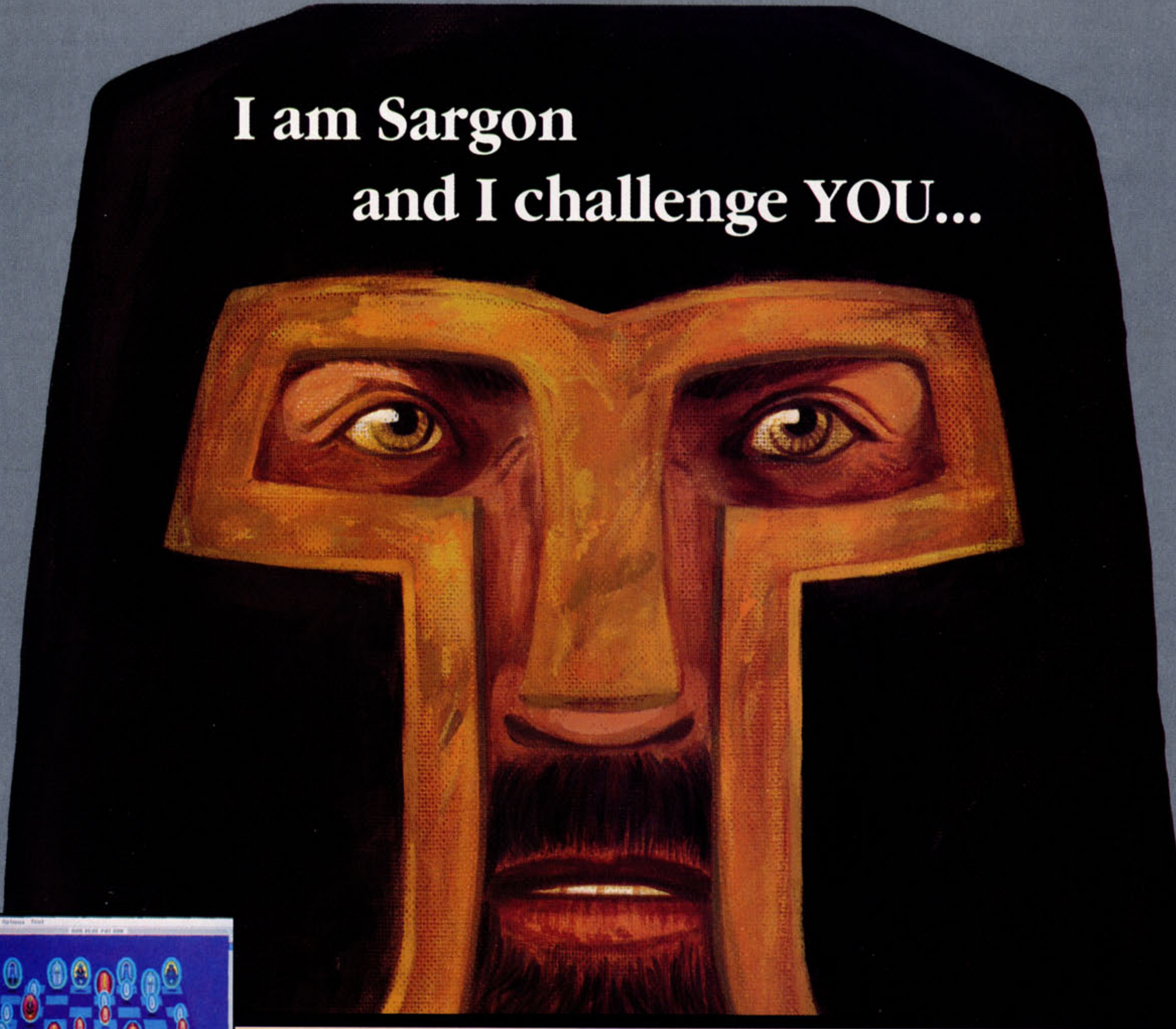
Freedom Flyer

The greatest strength of the game is the freedom it allows the player. There are a number of paths and playing styles that can lead to the game's conclusion. Personally, I love exploring and spent most of my time checking out practically every star system in the game. Consequently, a lot of my crew's earnings came from recommending planets for colonization, mining and creature collecting. Those who enjoy the trade aspect will probably find and milk one of several lucrative trade routes.

This ability to project one's own personality into the game makes it that much more enjoyable.

The world of *Starflight 2* is one of the most colorful worlds ever crammed into a computer. I would recommend this game to any adventure/role-playing megagamer, especially those burned out on

(Continued on page 82)


I am Sargon
and I challenge YOU...

Knights of Myomer

Activision's "MechWarrior"

by Johnny L. Wilson



Only three of his hastily loosed missiles made their target, but those hit with a vengeance. One exploded into one of the Rifleman's autocannon ejection ports, fusing the ejection mechanism. The other missiles both slammed into the radar wing whirling like a propeller above the 'Mech's hunched shoulders. The first explosion froze the mechanism in place. The second blast left the wing hanging by thick electrical cables.

Had enough? Justin demanded silently.

As if in reply, the Rifleman twisted its torso again. Its two medium torso lasers and the one remaining autocannon fired on their tormentor. Up and running again, Justin eluded the assault, but knew that he could not hope to avoid disaster forever. He just had to make it worth it.

—Michael A. Stackpole,
Warrior: En Garde

Welcome to the *Battletech* universe. When I first read the scene above and some of the fast-moving battle scenes surrounding it, I was hooked. At game conventions, I had seen dedicated players intent upon winning *Battletech* in its boardgame incarnation and I had even watched a friend play the **Infocom** role playing game, *Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception*, yet this 31st Century "lostech" universe seemed as unreal to me as the "Transformers" in that Japanimation-style television cartoon until I started reading the trilogy.

Suddenly, I realized what the attraction was. These weren't simply huge robots or humanoid tanks slugging (or perhaps, slagging) it out in wars of planetary conquest. Instead, each "BattleMech" was a huge armored humanoid war machine held together with myomer muscles and piloted by the elite warriors of a dying culture, high tech descendents of the age of chivalry. I booted *Battletech: The Crescent Hawk's Inception* on my Amiga. I invested two nights in play, but somehow it still didn't capture the magic that I was discovering in Stackpole's *The Warrior Trilogy [Ed: published in paperback by FASA Corporation]* (I know others who feel more positively about the role-playing game).

Then, in the course of preparing last month's "Christmas Buying Guide", we received an advanced copy of *MechWarrior* and I found what I was looking for. *MechWarrior* is a BattleMech simulator. It allows players to enter the cockpit of a BattleMech and fight it out like the heroes in the novels. *MechWarrior* is a real-time simulation (utilizing a choice of joystick- or keyboard driven action) which offers realistic looking 3-D scrolling images of opposing and allied BattleMechs. The story line centers around a displaced noble who is functioning as a mercenary (under an abbreviated name) in order to earn enough C-bills and learn enough information to find a particular artifact and be restored to power. Essentially, *MechWarrior* offers a role-playing "shell" (i.e. graphic interface) to facilitate the player's trek through the *Battletech* universe fighting a series of battles. Most battles last about 10 minutes. The player can recruit team members for his mercenary team; purchase and repair his BattleMechs; buy a new 'Mech or sell his old ones; observe what is happening in other parts of the universe through the News Net (events in all the Battletech novels occur at the appropriate times); travel to planets belonging to other "houses"; or request a contract from the "house" which governs the current planet the player's character is on.

(Continued on page 28)

Q. *What do you get when you mix sharp graphics and sensational sound with unbeatable game play?*





A. *Addicted.*

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QUADRALIEN. The mission: Find and destroy the evil Quadraliens who have infested Cybernetic Power Station ASTRA and bring the reactor back under control. Work your way through ASTRA's nineteen chambers with only six droids (each with its own unique feature) to find and destroy the Quadralien Mother Creature. You'll need ingenuity - as well as lasers! - to fight through the aliens and maze-like corridors of ASTRA. Strategic thinking, a puzzle-solving mind, and a quick trigger-finger are all required, so take your time and plan your moves. But you'd better hurry - the temperature's rising toward a meltdown of cosmic proportions!



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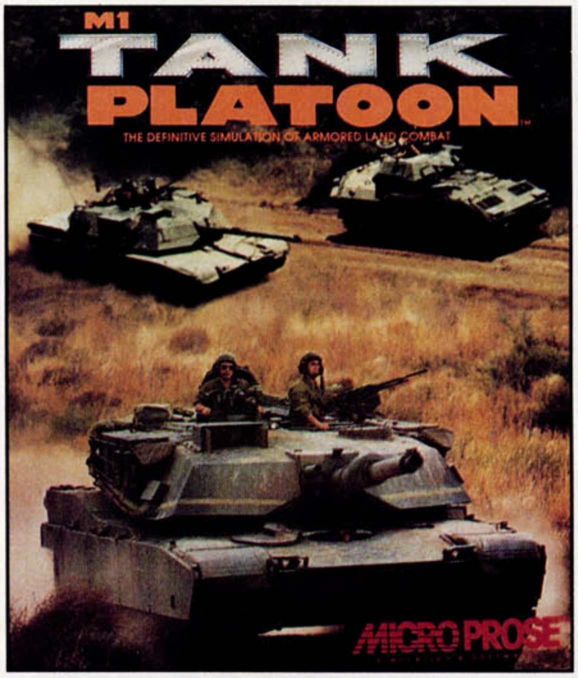
SPINNAKER

M1 TANK PLATOON

by M. Evan Brooks

'Twas the night before Christmas
and out on the flank
Not a creature was stirring—not even a Tank!
The soldiers were sleeping, lined up in their cots
When out to the front rang a series of shots.
Offensive! Offensive! Get them to run,
We'll kick Commie butt fore this night is all done!
First thousands, then hundreds, then dozens, then one
Sent straight to hell by our trusty M1!"
-With apologies to W. Clement Moore

M. Evan Brooks is an officer in the United States Army Reserves. In addition to his test drive of an M1 Abrams recounted in CGW *#60 (June, 1989), soon-to-be Lt. Col. Brooks has also successfully passed the army's Advanced Armor school. This "inside" perspective made him the natural choice for reviewing* M1 Tank Platoon.



TITLE:	M1 TANK PLATOON
SYSTEM:	IBM (384K)
# PLAYERS:	1
PRICE:	$69.95
DESIGNERS:	Microprose Labs
PUBLISHER:	Microprose Software Hunt Valley, MD

M1 Tank Platoon is **Microprose**'s contemporary armor simulation. For the first time, a design has recognized that tanks do not operate in vacuum and that a solitary tank as an offensive instrument is a contradiction in terms. Unlike **Accolade**'s *Steel Thunder* or **Electronic Arts**' *Abrams Battle Tank*, *M1 Tank Platoon* allows the user to control a platoon of four (4) M1 Abrams MBT (main battle tanks) plus numerous support elements.

It is interesting to note the reputation of the simulator weapons systems. Most grognards can name a famous ace (e.g., von Richthofen, Bishop, Ball [WWI], Galland, Bader, Bong [WWII]) or a famous submariner (e.g., Prien, Dealey, O'Kane), but how many can name a famous tanker? Sorry, Patton and Rommel were Army commanders, not "down-and-dirty" tankers. In fact, who has heard of the greatest tanker in history—Michael Wittman (cf. Williamson's *Knights of the Iron Cross*, pp. 105-107)? The tank achieves results through mass action and not the single exploits of an individual. Therefore, **Microprose** has rightly seen fit to present armored conflict as platoon conflict as opposed to heroism by an individual.

Documentation

The documentation consists of a 200+-page manual, a ten page technical supplement, and the keyboard overlay. Actually, the instructions on how to use the program amount to only thirty pages and the remainder of the manual consists of a tutorial ("training runs") along with a detailed analysis/exposition of modern armor, tactics and vehicular information. The manual is very detailed and successfully introduces the novice to the concepts of armored tactics. However, for the user without the patience to read the entire manual, there are summaries and "quick tips" which allow one to gain a rapid familiarity with the game system without doing the detail work.

For those interested in further reading, the documentation recommends a number of sources as well as noting the military manuals which were most useful. For additional reading, this reviewer would recommend F.W. von Mellinthin's classic *Panzer Battles* for his experiences and observations on the Russian fighting man and William Baxter's *Soviet Air-Land Battle Tactics* for an overview of probable contemporary Soviet tactics.

Graphics

There is no question that the graphics are the best currently available for a tank simulation. Prior armor simulations generally had decent internal (instrumentation) or external graphics. None did both well. *M1 Tank Platoon* does an excellent job of portraying the internal views of the tank and a very good job of the external environment.

One can shift internally between three out of four positions (driver, gunner and tank commander, but not loader [whose role is rather limited in real life]), as well as among each of one's four tanks. Additionally, one can select the "outside tank" view; similar to the "chase plane" view in flight simulators, this allows one to view the action from the outside and pan a full circle. When combat is initiated and shell explosions begin to precipitate from above, it is fascinating to watch the action in this manner (warning: mesmerization can result in the destruction of one's platoon and supporting elements!).

Smoke is rendered by the polygon-fill technology used by **Microprose** and appears as gray-black wedges a la Peter Max. Although the wedges may not look realistic, they *are* functional in portraying the effect of smoke on the battlefield. While a hit vehicle or building may yield secondary and even tertiary explosions (which are quite interesting), close proximity to "the bombs bursting in air" enhances the "Peter Max" effect.

Game Play

Although the program may be installed on a hard drive, it uses both a key disk and a vehicle identification scheme. In what is a commendable user-friendly innovation, one may save his "options". Thus, joystick options, color scheme, and sound do not have to be reselected every time—a simple "tank/o" will suffice and it can even omit the introductory screens!

M1 may be placed in either single engagement (blitzkrieg, meeting engagement, hasty attack, assault, defend or rearguard action) or campaign (all missions placed in a chronological context)

(Continued on page 26)



A dead woman...
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A missing husband...

It's the hottest story in London and you've just been scooped! Your editor is furious and your rivals at the Morning Star are gloating. Save your paper - and your job - by solving the murder and scooping the Star!

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SPINNAKER

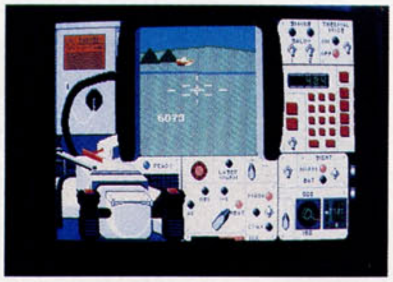
(Continued from page 24)

M1 TANK PLATOON

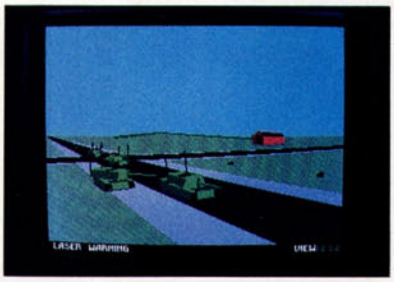
mode. One may select opponents as second line, first line, veteran, or guards (elite). Even the second line troops are no push-over and the pell-mell assault without a well-conceived tactical plan is doomed to a quick demise. Designer Arnold Hendrick notes that the largest differential in unit abilities is between second and first line troops. Finally, missions may occur at day, night, or in rain and snow as well as "normal" weather conditions.



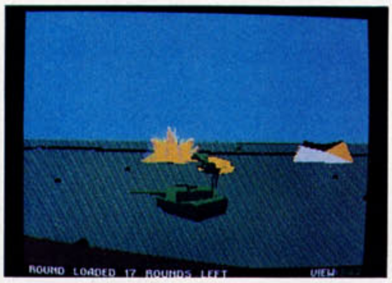
M-1 Tactical Map



M-1 Gunners View



"Outside Tank View" of Platoon Preparing to Attack.



Platoon Under Heavy Fire.

For the new user, the defense is strongly recommended. The platoon is usually in a good formation, and the enemy will attack; therefore, the user's mission is to "stay put and kick butt". Even the second-line troops can sometimes present a problem, and the elite troops will generally use an axis of advance that will present real difficulties. Shifting to the gunner position will allow one to personally lay and fire the main gun (selecting either sabot or HEAT [high explosive anti-tank]). Even with a laser range-finder, sighting is an art—the computer automatically accounts for movement of the enemy, but only as long as you are moving the sight to bear directly on the target; eventually, one will learn when and where the appropriate "lead" is. Even with the laser ranging system, a stationary tank remains a more stable weapons platform than a moving one.

In playing the simulation, one does not portray any particular person in the platoon. Rather, the player is the "spirit" of the platoon. One can shift among the positions, but this reviewer notes that certain positions are more "useable" than others. The driver will be used to verify the "hull-down" position of the tank; by switching between driver and gunner, one can put the vehicle into a hull defilade position on the defensive. This presents a smaller target and is essential for survival on the battlefield. Also, one can achieve approximately a ten percent speed increase over the computer by directly accessing the driver. The tank commander is used for spotting enemy concentrations and possibly engaging light targets and air elements; it is difficult to bring down a Hind helicopter, but it can be done. The gunner is where the action occurs, and assuming one wants to "get down and dirty", the gunner station will see the action.

Beginning with a tank platoon of "fair quality", battlefield success will yield a maximum of three promotions and three decorations. Each promotion/decoration can raise a crew member's expertise level (inept-poor-fair-good-superior-expert). Taking an inexperienced platoon and raising it to a "killer team" will take many missions. However, frustration can occur when one's elite team is killed and retraining has to start *ab initio*. If at least one crew member survives the mission, then the user can simply elect to reboot and the mission will be "erased"; however, if the platoon is wiped out, it is too late. To avoid this, one may save the following files via DOS commands to a separate disk (PACT, ROSTER, OPTS); this is not mentioned in the documentation and is in fact a "semi-cheat". Then again, the computer won't know and who will tell?

While historical experience shows that tank engagements usually occur at less than 500 meters, contemporary weaponry is expected to engage at much farther distances. With M1, one can engage out to 2300 meters or greater. This reviewer scored a kill on a BMP at 4200 meters, although it was a lucky shot. The more lethal the range and Pk (probability of kill), the more likelihood of survival on the battlefield. While a scale is not given on the strategic map, it is eight kilometers square. The West European battlefield will rarely have the semi-open ranges depicted herein, since it is so heavily populated, but the game battlefield was designed for playability as well.

TACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Use of support elements: As a key to success, air, artillery and infantry can often win the battle by themselves or at least place victory within the player's grasp. Also, while their loss may impact on one's rating, it is not a severe drain. Thus, remember—"they were expendable". Often, air support (A-10 aircraft and gunship/recon helicopters) are somewhat reticent to engage. One can't do anything about this except gripe about the "wimpy pilots"; don't worry—this occurs in real-life more than in the game!

Use of smoke: Smoking may be hazardous to your health, but lack of smoke

(Continued on page 57)

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Finally there's a game that's still an adventure years after you buy it: *Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?*®

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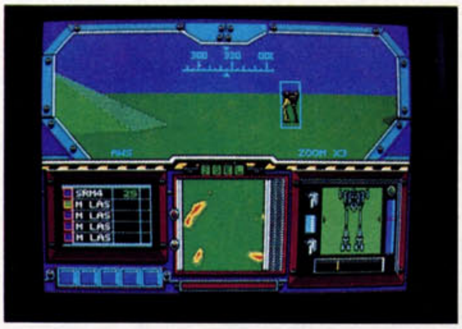
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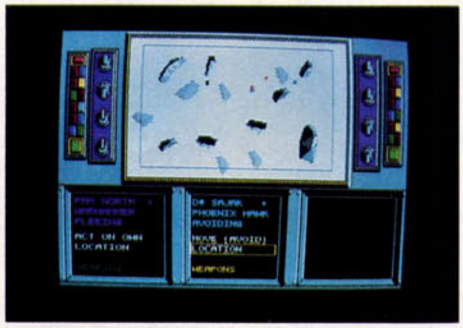
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(Continued from page 22)

MechWarrior



A MechWarrior targets a "Locust" from the cockpit view.



The command screen showing a map of an ice world and orders being given to fellow 'Mechs.

"Once again I find my realm indebted to your family. I hope the Federated Suns is ever worthy of your courage and sacrifice."

—Hanse Davion to Justin Xiang Allard in Michael A. Stackpole's Warrior: En Garde

The game begins with the player's character located on a random planet belonging to one of the five houses (i.e. dynasties) which rule surviving portions (successor states) of the once great Star League (Davion, Kurita, Liao, Marik or Steiner). He has a Jenner which needs to be repaired and a token amount of money. There are a few clues to be gleaned toward solving the story line on this planet, but to follow up on the clues, the player will have to successfully complete some mercenary missions and earn enough money to upgrade his 'Mech, recruit a crew, and travel off planet. Then, he can continue with the story.

The fact is, many players will become so enamored with battling enemy 'Mechs in the mercenary missions that they will forget the story line and simply fight on behalf of their randomly assigned loyalty. Of course, fighting on behalf of one house means that the character is building up hostility on behalf of other houses. You can't keep destroying Marik fuel dumps and salvaging Marik 'Mechs on behalf of House Kurita (The Draconis Combine) without incurring the wrath of the Free World's League (House Marik). So, if your character needs to travel to one of another house's planets after several mercenary missions against those very planets, he will get a very chilly reception.

Players request mercenary missions by clicking the pointer beside the icon representing the particular planet's ruling house (Not all planets have missions available, but all the initial start planets have a selection of potential missions). There is usually a good mix of potential missions available. Players can use their 'Mechs to defend bases, fuel dumps, communications centers and the like; pilot their 'Mechs in diversionary assaults; or fight their 'Mechs through enemy machines until they recover lost equipment and/or hostages. The difficulty of each mission increases proportionately to the player character's experience, upgrades in equipment, and team recruitment.

It is a good idea to page through the potential contracts and select the missions which are potentially either the most profitable or the most winnable. Each contract will give: an approximation of the enemy's mechanized strength (broken down into categories reflecting the number of Heavy, Medium or Light 'Mech units), a percentage rate which reflects the mercenary team's "cut" of any salvageable 'Mechs they should happen to bring back, and the base fee for successful completion of the mission.

Once the player chooses the optimal mission and equips his 'Mech(s), he simply clicks beside the "drop ship" icon in order to be transported (via a beautifully animated lift-off sequence) to the planet where the contract is to be fulfilled. Once on the planet's surface, the player is shown a map of the combat area, mission objective, and known positions of enemy 'Mechs. If the mercenary team has more than one member, the player can access a command screen in order to give orders to the other team members. They can be allowed to act on their own; ordered to move to avoid; commanded to defend; placed optimally for an ambush; or directed to charge head-on for an all-out attack.

Justin almost laughed aloud. Yes, how stupid of me not to have seen it sooner . . . Wolfson almost fried himself running after me while firing wildly like that. Justin flexed the Centurion's left hand and looked at the gleaming blades on the last three fingers. Smiling to himself, Justin turned his 'Mech in the direction of the Rifleman.

—Michael A. Stackpole, Warrior: En Garde.

Once the preliminaries are taken care of, the player is provided with an "out-the-cockpit" view as though he were on one of the command couches inside a BattleMech. The outside landscape is rendered in polygon-filled graphics, but the terrain features and colors are consistent with the type of planet the mercenaries happen to be fighting on (In fact, even the

(Continued on page 59)

Welcome to the Fight Palace.



"Humans come apart so easily in the pit. Especially when you pull on their arms." **—Mondu the Fat**

Two creatures in a pit, strange moves, magical weapons, wild betting and your host, Mondu the Fat. Pick your lifeform, load up on bio-weapons, then punish or perish in the most outrageous game ever created—*Tongue of the Fatman.*



Pick Your Lifeform
Control and combat a variety of aliens, each with different moves and special animations. Ten beings to master.



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The *Multimax 764 Steroids* pumped you up. *Grasfur Slug Eggs* might slow the Cryoplast long enough to nail him.

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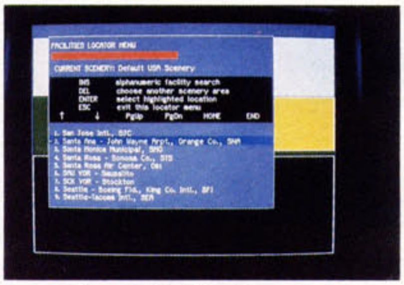
Flying Off The Shelf

New Products From subLOGIC

by Russel Sipe



Buzzing the Golden Gate Bridge with Flight Simulator 4.0.



Instant Facilities Locator



A View of Pearl Harbor from Hawaiian Odyssey.



Looking into Mauna Loa Volcano.



Buzzing the Fantasy Scenery Keyboard.

After a hiatus of many months without a significant release, SubLOGIC, publisher and developer of cutting edge flight simulators has released (or is about to release) a number of new and interesting flight simulator products.

Microsoft Flight Simulator 4.0

Developed by subLOGIC and licensed to **Microsoft**, *Microsoft Flight Simulator 4.0* (*FS4.0*) was released in September. Improvements in *FS4.0* include the ability to adjust flight characteristics and create experimental aircraft; the inclusion of a sailplane; random weather variations and updrafts have been added; additional aircraft fly in your airspace; spot mode view direction can be changed from the keyboard; Approach lighting systems have been added (they look great on night approaches); air traffic control communications have been added; and last but not least, improved aircraft flight characteristics.

The "improved flight characteristics and the dynamic weather makes both level flight and landing more difficult. However you can defeat these new features if you wish.

"Pilots" with 386 machines now have custom 386 modules that make the program run faster by using 386 microprocessor-specific instructions. However, the one acknowledged bug in the program affects only 386 users. Near the end of the demo program the EPIS navigation module activates. If you go on to fly the simulation after this, the program can lockup on 386 machines. The official fix (given by Microsoft) is as follows:

1. Rename FS4.EXE to FS4.OLD

2. Type "DEBUG FS4.OLD". Don't type the quotes.

3. At the "-" prompt, type "ECS:B33C 90 90 90 90 90".

4. Type the letter "W", hit return, type the letter "Q", hit return. This writes the change to FS4.OLD.

5. Rename FS4.OLD to FS4.EXE and run the program.

Many Microsoft Flight Simulator 3.0



owners are miffed that Microsoft has not provided for an upgrade policy from 3.0 to 4.0. The debate on online services such as PRODIGY personal service and Compuserve has been lively.

When asked, Microsoft customer support explained that *FS4* is different enough from 3.0 that new documentation was required. The cost of upgrading with new documentation would not be significantly less than the purchase price of the new product. Therefore they did not institute an upgrade policy on *FS4.0*. For the record: other computer entertainment companies *have* offered upgrade policies on new versions of entertainment products. For example each of the following products were upgraded with complete new packages: **Electronic Arts** - *Earl Weaver 1.5* ($17) and *Chuck Yeager 2.0* ($24); **Mindscape** - *Balance of Power 1990* ($25); and **Strategic Simulations, Inc.** - *President Elect 1988* ($10). When one realizes that computer gamers do not make up the bread and butter customers of Microsoft (as they do for these other companies), we begin to understand Microsoft's attitude, even if we do not agree with it.

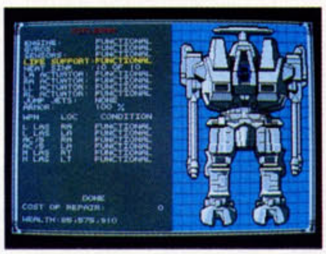
In the computer entertainment industry there is an informal rule that determines

(Continued on page 32)

I Have Become Death
The Destroyer of Worlds



Standing between you and a mission complete is 70 tons of armor plate, myomer muscle and lethal weaponry. Just another day's work for a 31st-century Mechwarrior.™ Prove yourself and you'll command a full four-Mech lance. Then you'll be ready to take on the DarkWing, scourge of the Inner Sphere.



The Battletech™ universe comes alive in accurate detail.



1st person out-the-cockpit perspective with Heads-Up-Display.

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(Continued from page 30)

Flying Off The Shelf

the value of a product: if the product gives you one hour of playing time per dollar spent it is worth the price. By that formula *FS4* is, without a doubt, an exceptional buy in computer entertainment. *FS4* is available for the IBM ($59.95 retail).

Hawaiian Odyssey

Hawaiian Odyssey (*HO*) is an add-on disk to any of the subLOGIC designed flight simulation programs (Flight Simulator II, Microsoft Flight Simulator, Jet, Stealth Mission, UFO or the IBM version of ThunderChopper). Not only does *HO* add the magnificent Hawaiian Islands to the subLOGIC collection of scenery databases, it also includes some very interesting "fantasy" scenery and a structured adventure.

In the adventure you must find and follow an intricate set of clues scattered about the Hawaiian Islands that lead you to your goal: the secret jewel of the goddess Pele. Even if you determine the hidden jewel's location, you may not succeed. The jewel is only visible under certain strict conditions. Make a mistake during your final approach and you may get lost forever.

The fantasy scenery places you in some very unique locations. The most interesting of which include a kitchen and a piano. Picture yourself in a fly-sized Cessna and you will begin to understand. Glide across the keyboard, power up and fly into the kitchen, buzz the range and land on the kitchen counter (don't crash into the drawers!). *Hawaiian Odyssey* is or will be available for the IBM, Atari ST, Amiga, Apple II and Macintosh computers for $29.95.

Instant Facilities Locator

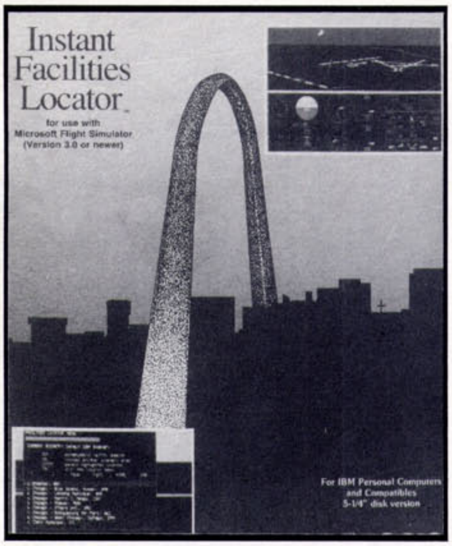
Instant Facilities Locator (*IFL*) is a time saver for the serious Flight Simulator 3.0/4.0 user. With *IFL* you can quickly and easily load any location in your database of SubLOGIC scenery disks (obviously, IFL only works with hard disks). After installation, IFL becomes item 8 on the NAV/COM menu. When you access IFL, you simply type in the name of the location you wish to be transported to. The program performs a binary-chop search to narrow down your request (i.e. each keystroke accesses locations beginning with that sequence). In most cases three keystrokes will either access your location or get you very close on the display list.

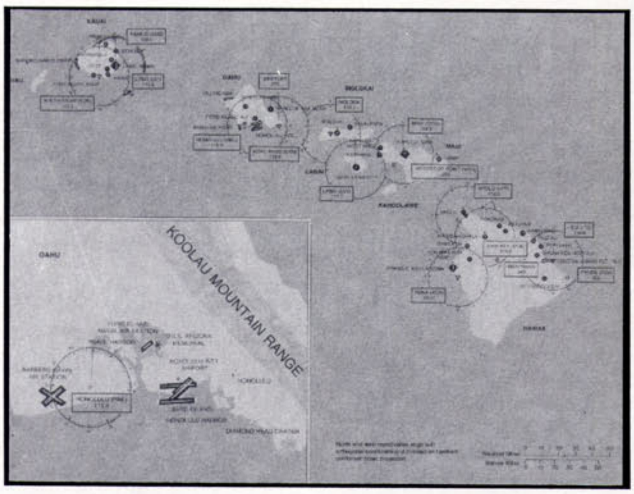
There is a small file "bug" in using *IFL* with the new 4.0 version of the Flight Simulator. After installing *IFL* on your hard disk you will need to rename CONFIG.FS3 to CONFIG.FS4 in the subdirctory containing *IFL*. Otherwise, the *IFL* option will not appear on the NAV/COM menu.

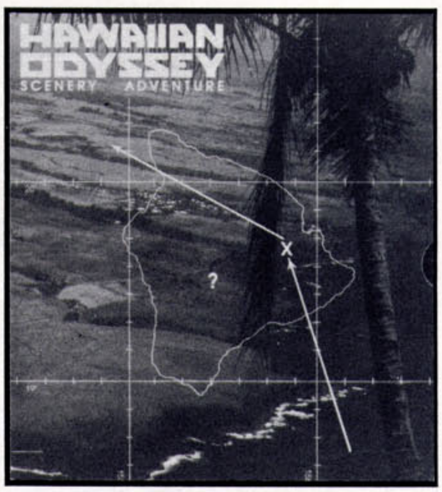
Although *IFL* is a nice convenience, at $39.95 retail its market will be limited to a small, but dedicated, group of Flight Simulator 3.0/4.0 "power users".

Scenery Disk #9

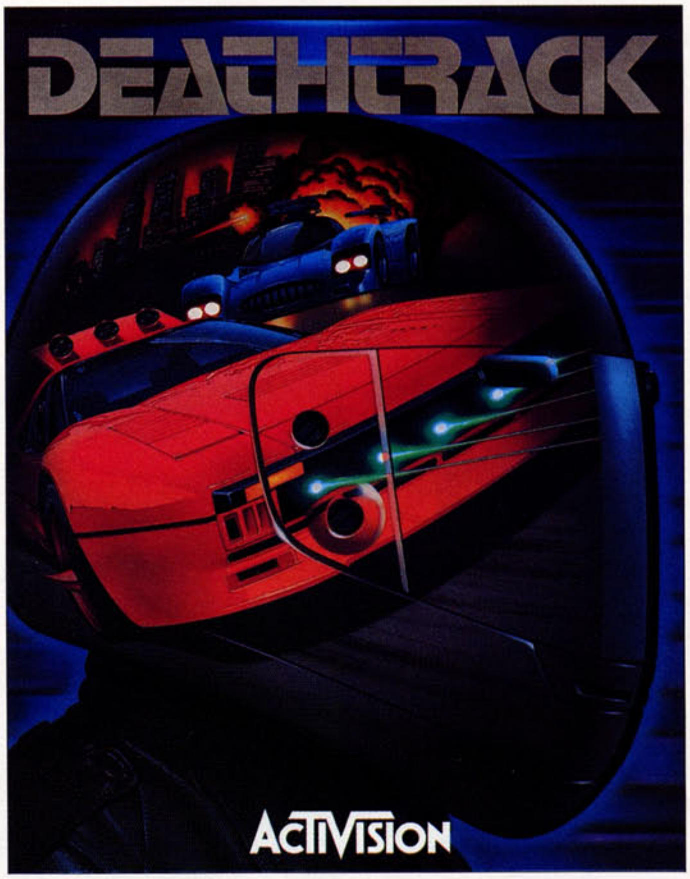
SubLOGIC's newest scenery disk covers the Chicago, St.Louis, and Cincinnati sectional areas in wonderful 3D detail. Over 150 airports are included (many with Visual Approach Slope Indicator landing light systems). The city of Chicago is rendered in much greater detail than in previous products. The St.Louis sectional includes the Gateway Arch which you can add to the list of spans you've flown under (you HAVE flown under the Golden Gate Bridge haven't you?). The Cincinnati region also includes more than thirty mountains in the Allegheny region stretching from Clinch Mountain, Tennessee through Shenandoah National Park, Virginia to Laurel Hill, Pennsylvania. The Ohio River is navigable from Wheeling, West Virginia through Cincinnati and Louisville, Kentucky to it's confluence with the Mississippi at Cairo, Illinois. Disk #9 is or will be available for the IBM, Atari ST, Amiga, and Macintosh computers for $29.95. **CGW**







Everyone on the Road is Armed and Dangerous



Hurtling through the turn, you lock-on to the lead car and fire. In less than a second, your Falcon missile slams into the target and explodes in a ball of fire. You smile to yourself —he was a good assassin, but a lousy driver. Instantly, your radar detects a Terminator bearing down on your exhaust. You swerve, but it's too late. A small mistake ends another brief career on the *DEATHTRACK*—yours.



In the Hot Seat.
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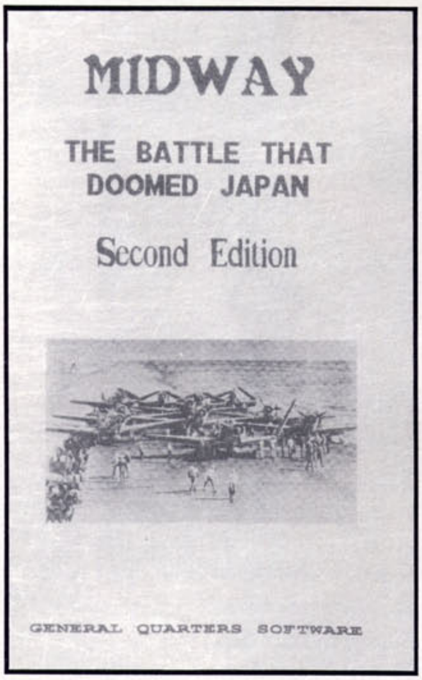
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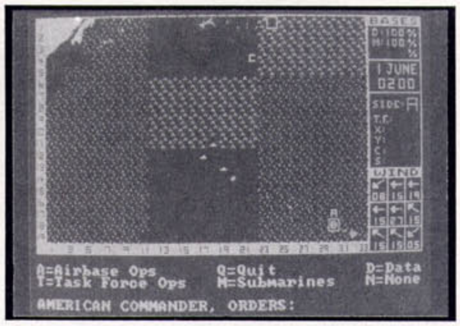
Miracle At Midway

General Quarters' "Midway"

by Lt. H. E. Dille



TITLE:	Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan
SYSTEMS:	Apple II, IBM
REVIEWED:	IBM
# PLAYERS:	1-2
PRICE:	$35.00
DESIGNER:	Dr. Owen P. Hall, Jr.
PUBLISHER:	General Quarters Software P.O. Box 1429 Torrance, CA 90505



In 1942, the blood red rising sun of the Japanese Empire had spread undaunted across the Pacific basin like a crimson stain. American seapower was at its modern nadir, struggling to rebuild from the debacle at Pearl Harbor and the recent stalemate in the Coral Sea. From a position of decided strength, the Japanese High Command, under the guidance of Admiral Yamamoto, pondered their strategic options. Three distinct courses of action were under consideration: a westward thrust into the Indian Ocean; a drive to the south to threaten Australia and New Guinea; or an easterly push toward Midway and Pearl Harbor. An American initiative, namely the Doolittle raid on mainland Japan, precipitated a decision for the latter option. A battle force of over 140 ships, including four front line and four light carriers, was assembled and given orders to neutralize the centrally located island of Midway.

Unbeknownst to the Japanese, American intelligence assets had already cracked the Japanese code. As such, Admiral Nimitz was able to hastily prepare an ambush for the coming onslaught. Utilizing his three remaining carriers, Enterprise, Hornet and Yorktown, Nimitz ordered all of his assets to sally forth and take the battle to the enemy. Privately, the Admiral had little hope for their success. Despite seemingly insurmountable odds, the American Task Group succeeded in destroying Japan's Carrier Group and forced the Japanese High Command to abort the operation. This victory did more to restore the fighting spirit of the U. S. Navy than any other in the war and came to be known, rightfully so, as the "Miracle at Midway".

Midway: The Battle That Doomed Japan is an operational level simulation of the conflict that forces players to appreciate the difficulty faced by Admiral Nimitz and his task force. All major surface combatants, above destroyer size escorts, are represented, as well as all sea and land based air wings. The exclusion of the smaller ships may ire some purists, but all things considered, their impact on the outcome of the battle was insignificant. Furthermore, by excluding them, the designer has focused players upon the objectives and made for a more evenly paced, cohesive game.

Game play takes place on a scale map of the Pacific basin from Pearl Harbor to the Japanese mainland, with Dutch Harbor and Wake Island forming the northern and southern boundaries respectively. Either historical or random set-up is allowed, but the Japanese forces cannot be located east of Wake Island nor American forces west of Midway. The total force composition is as follows:

JAPANESE	AMERICAN
4 Carriers	3 Carriers
4 Light Carriers	
7 Battleships	
14 Cruisers	8 Cruisers
	3 Light Cruisers
3 Submarines	3 Submarines
1 Troop Transport Group	

Each player may segregate units into task groups as desired, set movement objectives, and conduct searches. The latter, of course, is a major part of the game since one must obviously locate and track the enemy before one can successfully engage him. Three options exist for detection of enemy units: airborne reconnaissance via maritime patrol or carrier assets; visual or radar detection from surface ships; or submarine sightings. Submarine engagements impact upon the overall outcome, but since they occur exclusive of player interaction, they merit little comment herein. Surface engagements, however, involve maneuver, smoke, gun and torpedo resolution, but are significantly weighted in favor of the Japanese, due to the types of vessels involved. Consequently, as the American player, it is necessary to focus upon the centerpiece of the game (which was historically the deciding factor, as well), proper employment of carrier-based air power.

Players have the option of conducting searches every turn, weather permitting, and must determine the offensive/defensive mix of their air wings. Once an offensive strike has been planned, aircraft must be readied (fueled and pre-flighted), prepared (ordinance load out), and launched. All of these operations require time in the confined space of a flight deck and, therein lies the essence. Proper timing of air strikes involves attempting to catch the enemy carriers with loaded planes on deck (thereby obtaining secondary explosions and damage from their own fuel and bombs) or managing to reach them while their aircraft are off on another strike (hopefully, not against your carrier). The latter option is just as powerful as the first because the enemy aircraft are often unable to land on another carrier or "bingo" to a friendly base ashore.

Further complications for air operations involve deteriorated weather, battle damage and wind speed limitations. As a

(Continued on page 81)

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Charles Ardai takes a break from the grueling task of writing short stories for Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine and Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine in order to pen the first in a series of reviews for CGW on "Interactive Movies".

NOW PLAYING

POPCORN NOT INCLUDED

Dynamix's "David Wolf: Secret Agent"

by Charles Ardai

The "POPCORN NOT INCLUDED" Critical Creed

From the start, computer games have aspired to a style and a degree of polish best described as 'cinematic.' Only with today's most sophisticated techniques are significant advances being made toward this goal. However, in adopting a cinematic mode, today's games open themselves up to criticism on a cinematic level. It is not enough to achieve movie-quality software; one must also achieve *quality* movie-software.

It is from this critical standpoint that we will consider the new generation of "Interactive Movies." As one might evaluate separately the functional and aesthetic appeal of a building, we will evaluate separately the play and box office appeal of these games.

TITLE:	David Wolf, Secret Agent
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNERS:	Kevin Ryan, Damon Slye
PUBLISHER:	Dynamix Eugene, OR



Play: On Land, or Sea, or Air, Wolf

David Wolf, Secret Agent is so cinematic that one almost expects to read a script treatment such as the one that follows (Note: This scene would take place in between two that are actually in the game).

FADE IN:
INTERIOR: MARCH'S OFFICE—NIGHT
CLOSE-UP:

MARCH (The director is speaking on the telephone): *Wolf? Are you alright? This is Director March. Yes, I'm at the office. (Pause) No, listen to me. We need you back as soon as possible. I can't tell you over the phone . . . Oh, are you certain the phone is secure? Very well, it's Bruno Vasto. Yes, the same man. He's stolen one of our prototype bombers and now, he has a ransom demand in to the White House. David, he's threatening to drop an atomic bomb on Washington! (Pause) What? David, if we knew that, we wouldn't need you! . . . Yes, we have one lead. I'll tell you about it when you come in. How soon can you . . . Tomorrow? Excellent. I'll meet you at the airport.*

In terms of game play, however, the most important thing one must understand about *David Wolf: Secret Agent* is that it is a spiritual descendent of *Ms. Pac-Man*. This may surprise people who have never played the game, but who have seen the advertisements. After all, isn't *David Wolf* the first in **Dynamix**'s line of Interactive Movies? Yes, it is. It is also a game with a format very similar to *Ms. Pac-Man*, i.e. it consists of a half-dozen arcade-style action sequences separated by animated 'interludes' *[Ed: In* Ms. Pac-Man, *the animated sequences occur every few levels]*. The animation comes as a reward, in effect, for successful completion of an action sequence. Granted, the animation is digitized in this game; each animated interlude is of substantial length; and each digitized sequence advances the plot; but this just makes the reward that much more rewarding. On the level of game *type*, both *David Wolf* and *Ms. Pac-Man* are fundamentally the same.

Why is this of more than casual interest? Because it bears heavily on how one must interpret the word 'interactive' in 'Interactive Movie'. During an animated sequence, the player has no control over events. In fact, the player has *no* input whatever. The animated segments, which is to say the plot segments, which is to say the *movie* segments, are just there for the player's enjoyment: sit back and watch. Look at the gorgeous graphics. Listen to the soundtrack.

The problem with this lies on a psychological level. Traditionally, the animated sequences in games like *Pac-Man* were bonuses. Sure, they were nice, but they were just icing on the cake. The cake was what you paid your quarter for.

In an Interactive Movie, it is the adventure that players "pay" for. If there are action sequences to boot—as in *Manhunter* or *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade: The Graphic Adventure*they are the bonus. However, the format of *David Wolf* is such that players are asked to accept the material that induced them to buy the game, the secret-agent graphics and story, presented in a style traditionally reserved for 'icing'. In other words, players expect spy cake with cinematic-sequence icing. What they get is cinematic cake with game icing. This will very likely disappoint some players, which is why I feel obliged to spell it out here. This way, at least, you'll know what you're getting.

Frankly, *David Wolf, Secret Agent* is *not* an Interactive Movie. It is, at times, interactive and it is, at times, a movie, but never both at once. Players can in no way affect the plot. They can merely advance it or fail to advance it. Whether this is worth a player's time depends on two factors: how good the action sequences are in and of themselves, and how good the movie is, as a movie.

Of the action sequences, two are car chases, two are air chases (hang-glider and stealth bomber), and two are connected to jumping out of a plane (freefall and landing on the back of a truck). Out of these, the car chases suffer the most from lack of originality; even though the

(Continued on page 55)



You are the young Dauphin, Charles VII, born to be king of France. The year is A.D. 1429 and your country is torn by warfare. The hated English and Burgundians have already occupied much of fair France. But now the tide is turning.

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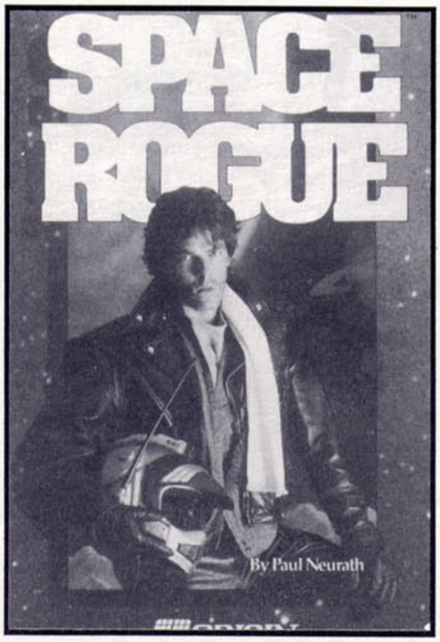
15CGW

Life in the Fast Frame

Origin's "Space Rogue"

by Omar DeWitt

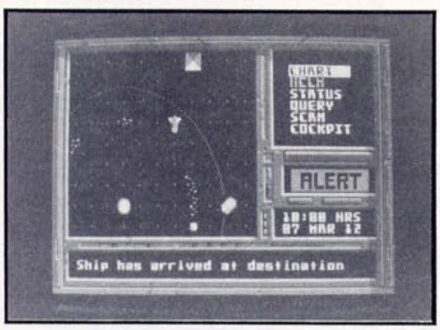
The Manchi fighter jumped me just as I emerged from the wormhole. A glance at the TAC display told me that the space scum was trying to ram me. Worse than that, it told me he was only 231 meters away! I hit the accelerator button as I jammed the joystick to the left. The Dart flashed by. I yanked the stick to follow and scored a hit with the laser. It disappeared. Following the targeting info on the screen, I sighted the Dart again and got a few more laser hits while taking a hit on my forward screen. The TAC display showed his armor to be below 100, so I finished him off with a SM-1.



It turned out there was a 63 Credit bounty on that ship. Big deal! It might *cover the repairs on my armor. After setting the autopilot, I soon was approaching the dock at Daneb Prime Starbase. Another Manchi started an attack run! My armor was wearing thin by now, so I used my last Nova heat-seeking missile. More space debris. After docking, I thought about going to the Cantina for a "Green Head", but . . .*

TITLE:	Space Rogue
SYSTEMS:	Apple II, C-64/128, IBM
REVIEWED:	Apple II
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Paul Neurath
PUBLISHER:	Origin Systems, Inc. Austin, TX 78716

I decided to walk to the kitchen for a Coke®. Maybe I'm getting too old for this kind of life. Bounty hunting, shoot-outs, smuggling, piracy, trading and intrigue are all part of *Space Rogue*. The path a player follows to fame and glory is wide open, but life is hard in the "Far Arms" star cluster and none of the paths is easy.



Choosing A Career

Players who feel like they're "Top Gun" material might try bounty hunting. The credits to be earned by knocking off the odd Manchi fighter should keep one's ship in repair and allow an occasional weapons upgrade. One doesn't have to buy fuel or food (and laser weapons *never* run out of ammunition), so a good pilot should eventually end up with an awesome ship. However, a pilot has to be *very* good to survive in combat with only his laser. Missiles are great but they will cost "Credits".

Some players will feel like "Piracy" is a good career choice. It can be lucrative, but since a well-equipped ship is almost a necessity, it should probably not be attempted in the early stages of the game.

The documentation suggests trading as the best initial occupation. It certainly is not an easy way to start, however. Valuable items are not often available and the prices to be offered for one's cargo are quite often less than that paid at another port. The result is that success in trading is due more to luck than to planning. The only thing a trader can be sure of is that if the goods he buys *can* spoil, they *will* spoil. The trader will also have to contend with Manchi fighters (the Manchi make Genghis Khan and his hordes look like a Boy Scout Jamboree) and pirates—just two other ways to lose a cargo.

Fortunately, since there are no levels of difficulty to choose from in *Space Rogue*, the play balance is built in and the early Manchi fighters to be faced are only so much laser-fodder. However, as the player's kill rate goes up, so does the quality of the opposition. Nevertheless, there are no easy profits for the novice trader.

Life and Death in Far Arm

The Far Arm is comprised of eight solar systems. Each solar system has only one or two stations, making trading within a system either very limited or totally non-existent. Traveling within each system is done on autopilot only, although the trip can be rudely interrupted by other spacecraft. The solar systems themselves, however, are linked by "wormholes". The spacecraft is maneuvered into a Milar Gate (players discover the location of these by experience) and through a twisting, turning series of circles. The spacecraft that does not stay within the circles is sent back to the entry gate. The longer the craft stays in the wormhole, the more armor is removed from the ship until the sweet smell of cinnamon tells the player it is time to reboot.

To this player, the sequence is like finding the "Chief" in *Seven Cities of Gold*. It is interesting the first few times, but soon turns into mere busy-work. On a scale of one to ten, the fun factor drops to negative three after the first few tries. If only there were a way to toggle the sequence and get on with the game.

Once the pilot reaches a given station, it is possible to trade, repair the ship, and talk to the people or robots who inhabit the station. The pilot's side of the conversation is limited to the choices offered on the screen, but the information learned is necessary to fully succeed in the game.

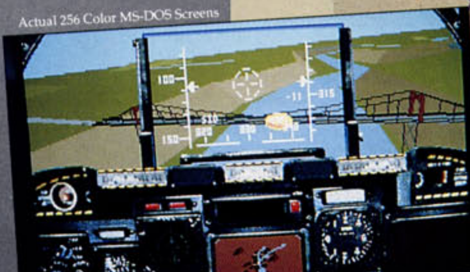
In The End . . .

This is not a game for the "junior joystick" class. If they survive the Manchi fighters, they must still negotiate the wormholes into another solar system. On the other hand, there is always the danger that real joystick jockeys may get impatient with the trading and "social interaction" needed for success in *Space Rogue*. Regardless, *Space Rogue* is an interesting blend of arcade action, role-playing interaction and economic strategy. **CGW**

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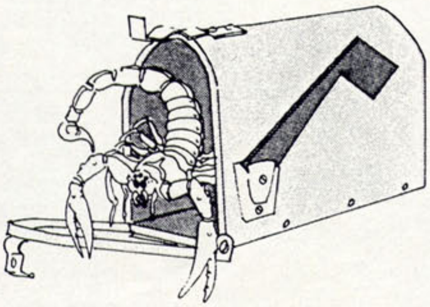
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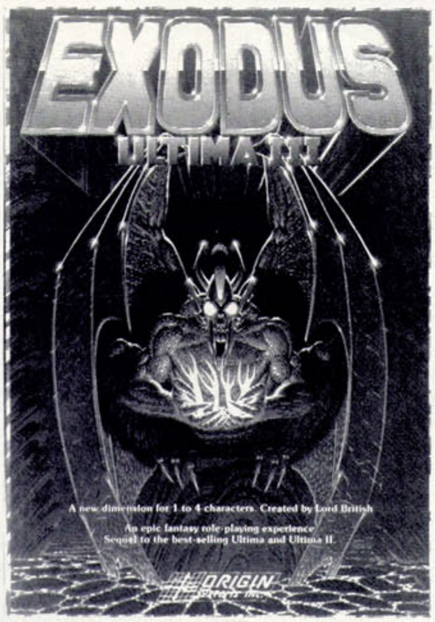
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Scorpion's Mail







Ho ho ho! Wow, it's that time of the year again already! Our Christmas Tree Monster is back in his corner, tinsel swishing and lights blinking. Fred has his shrunken-head garland up over the mantel piece as usual (no, you really *don't* want to take a close look at it), and the place is piled high with gaily-wrapped presents that look suspiciously like computer game boxes. Let's step out of the rush into the back room, where things are a bit more peaceful.

Before we get on to the hints, I must tell you about a serious matter regarding the US Mail. At the end of September, I found a letter from the Postal Service in my box, directing me to call at the window for held mail. As it turned out, a postal employee had been arrested for theft of mail. Apparently he had been taking various letters and ripping them open, hoping to find cash inside.

When caught, he had on him a letter addressed to me from a CGW reader. The contents, luckily, were intact; I was allowed to take those, although the Post Office kept the original envelope as evidence. Unfortunately, they could not tell me how long this had been going on, or if this person had previously stolen other mail addressed to me; the one letter was all they found.

So there is a possibility that some letters sent to me ended up in the trash instead of my box, courtesy of this person. It isn't definite, only possible. However, if you wrote to me any time in September or before, and never received a response, this may be the explanation.

Okay, let's get on to a more pleasant subject here, and see what's in the bag this month.

Manhunter: San Francisco:

Some people have been wondering why they can't get into certain places (such as the laundry). The answer is simple: it isn't time yet. Don't expect to be able to get in somewhere the first time you find it. If nothing works to get you in, then leave the place for now and come back another day. Also, keep in mind that the progression of days is linked mainly to where you have been (even if you couldn't get in), so you *must* visit the locations picked up by the tracker.

King's Quest IV:

Having found the elusive bridle, a few folks are having difficulties in getting it on the unicorn. You can't just walk up to it and slip the bridle on, as the unicorn (rightly!) doesn't quite trust you. So you need a way to make him like you.

Wizardry IV:

A reader told me that he had read in Quest For Clues II that all he needed to complete one ending of Werdna was the crystal rose. This is not correct. You need more than the rose. In fact, you need all the items obtainable at the inn. Without those, you cannot finish the "political" ending of the game (the reader mentioned above was having a hard time, as might be expected, but I think he's ok now).

Wizardry V:

Several letters lately have inquired about the mysterious chained door on level two. I never found a key for it myself, but it doesn't really matter. You can reach the area behind the door from a stairway on level three. Of course, finding the right stairs is up to you (grin). However, when you can deal with the vanishing spirit, you'll know you found the right place.

Wasteland:

Some readers have found Faran Brygo to be reclusive. Having visited him once, they are unable to see him a second time. Well, that's how it's *supposed* to be. Once is enough to obtain the information he has; there is no way (at least that I know of) to talk to him again. So after you've seen him once, just go your merry way, as there are more important things yet to be done in the game. Also, a reminder that the hatches in Darwin Base are only red herrings; there is nothing in them (except monsters) and you can't get into them yourself. They are best left alone.

Tangled Tales:

Much to my surprise, there are folks out there having trouble with the "magic word". Now really, it's not that hard. I'll bet your own moms have reminded (maybe even nagged) you about it when you were a kid (maybe even when you

(Continued on page 97)

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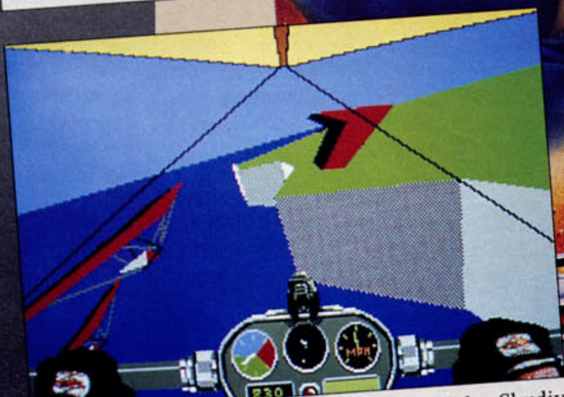
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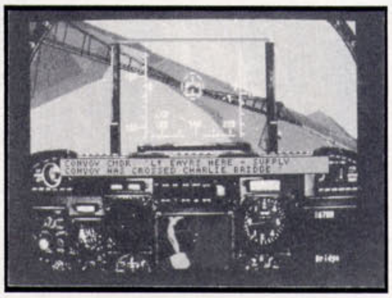
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A-10 TANK KILLER

Dynamix Takes to the Skies

by M. Evan Brooks





TITLE:	A-10 Tank Killer
SYSTEM:	IBM (512K)
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNER:	Damon Slye
PUBLISHER:	Dynamix Eugene, OR

A-10 Tank Killer is the first flight simulation to feature the Air Force's much-maligned close air support weapon, the Thunderbolt (better known as the Warthog). Sometimes known as "Death from Above" (with apologies to the Airborne), this plane is capable of destroying any tank in the world. The Army loves it, while the Air Force would like to see it disappear.

While close air support *is* a military necessity, it is *not* the "glory" role that the Air Force envisions. Instead, it is a dirty vicious mission which may well be determinative of victory. Now, no matter how much the Air Force dislikes the A-10 and no matter how much the Army would like to add it to its own inventory, the Key West Agreement (1948—which stipulates the respective spheres of the Army and the former Army Air Corps) keeps the planes under Air Force jurisdiction. Note that in Vietnam, helicopters were strictly Army vehicles due to Air Force indifference and hostility to close air support (for an interesting fictional treatment of these turf battles, cf. W.E.B. Griffin's *Brotherhood of War* series).

Documentation

The documentation is adequate but sparse—a manual (43 pages) and a reference card (which interestingly enough, omits some of the keyboard controls noted on pages 8-9 of the manual). This reviewer's first impression was that the manual was insufficient. However, a careful perusal of the manual did reveal complete game mechanics, buttressed by numerous screen shots and tactical guidance. This is primarily because the game emphasizes an on-hands experience and not an intellectual gestalt.

Graphics

A-10 relies heavily on digitized photographs—the credits even list the actors who portrayed the "pilots". This reviewer was somewhat nonplussed by the heavy use of digitization and looks at it with a sense of foreboding. While digitization may well lead to interesting screen shots (e.g., the instrumentation panel is extremely well done), it does consume large amounts of memory. Is there a tendency to substitute digitization for programming? Apparently not, since *A-10* offers an excellent program in addition to the digitized pictures.

The digitization is impressive. Basic weapon loads shift before his eyes as the user makes a choice (preparatory attack, general purpose, insurgency, etc.). One is restricted to the program loads, but this was a design choice. Generally, one particular load is recommended.

The explosion sequences of *A-10* are superb. Hitting an enemy tank will yield a crimson fireball wending its way into the sky. It looks real!! Not since *Battlehawks: 1942* have scenes of destruction been so well executed.

Game Play

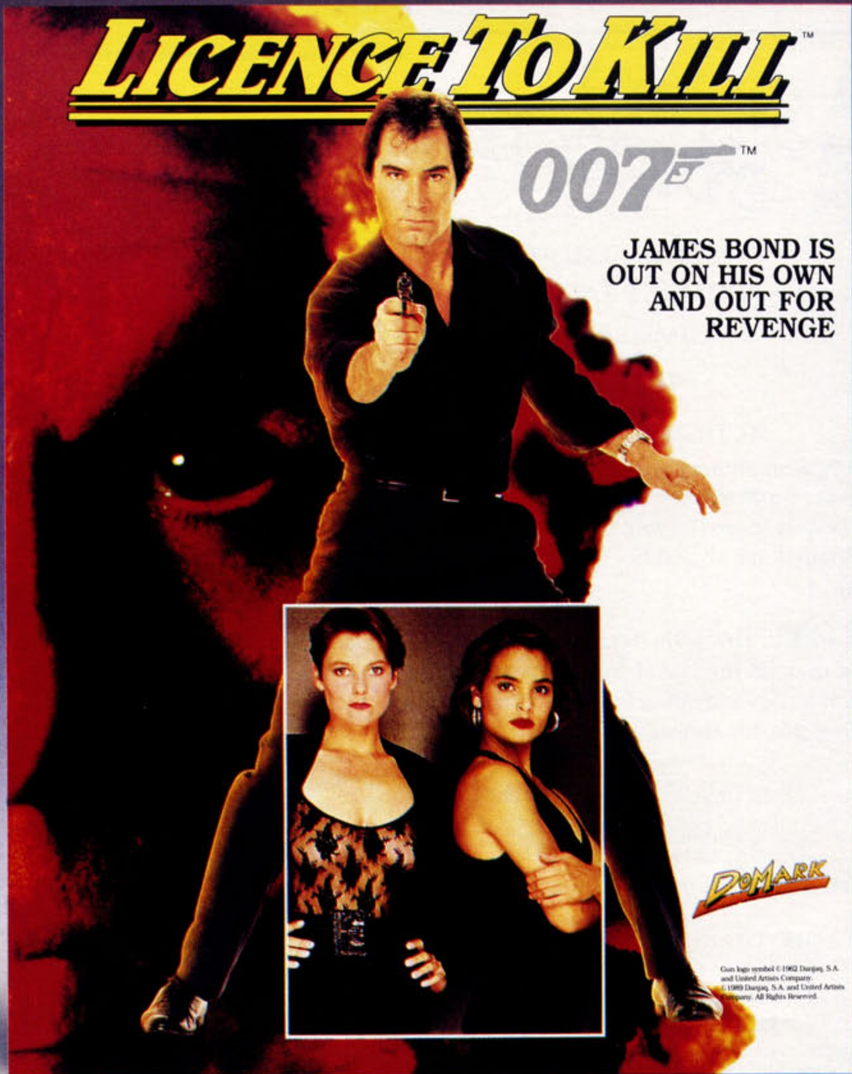
A-10 is the first product reviewed by this reviewer that was not initially playable on his machine. With a CompuAdd 386 20 MHz, *A-10* simply was too fast—a slight touch to the joystick was sufficient to wing-over into the ground. In fact, use of the rudder was the only way to achieve any sort of controlled turn mode.

It was also difficult to maintain a stable altitude. Due to these limitations, Avenger gun target acquisition was not possible, and maneuverability suffered greatly. Slowing down to an 8 MHz (1 wait state) yielded a "clunker". Discussions with other users have revealed that *A-10* would seem to be optimized for a 286 12 MHz machine. Fortunately, **Dynamix**, a young company (virtually all company employees are under 30; Mario Savio is alive and well and working in Oregon!), has taken note of this problem and will issue a a revised version. If the program runs too quickly on a machine, Version 2.0 will allow a toggle switch for slow-down purposes (Shift-1 through 9). The A-10 remains a frisky plane, subject to quick auguring into the ground, but such is the life of the close air support pilot. If a user has the first version (so noted by the lack of a version number), a revised Disk 1 will be mailed upon corporate receipt of the registration with the notation "Upgrade". Alternatively, one may download the revision from **Dynamix**'s BBS (503-687-8497). Designer Damon Slye notes that Version 2.0 will also correct the difficulties of playing the game on disk with an **AdLib** sound board, which some gamers discovered (although those using hard drives had no problem with the **AdLib** board).

Also, if the program is running too slowly, a detail window can be accessed which "speeds up" the simulation, but at some sacrifice in depth. This type of attention to detail is appreciated by the user.

Dynamix emphasizes the playability of *A-10*, stressing its "feel"

(Continued on page 44)



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(Continued from page 42)

A-10 TANK KILLER

over detailed historical accuracy. The user reports to "Commander Cord"; since the Air Force does not use such a rank, the "naval" rank (equivalent to an Air Force lieutenant colonel) seems somewhat silly. But overall, the program succeeds in imparting the necessary "feel". It is easy to learn and play. In fact, it is quite interesting. Just remember, the A-10 is optimized for close support; most flying will be done under 400 feet and this requires concentration. SAMs (surface-air missiles) are shown with their "umbrella" of coverage and an optimal approach run should evade such coverage. If such coverage cannot be avoided, of course, the first run should be to take out the SAM launch platforms.

The entire product emphasizes playability. For example, take offs can be accomplished with a single keystroke. Yet, there are some anomalies. Some will not like the fact that the keyboard bomb release ("return key") often requires multiple keystrokes before "taking". However, button number two on the joystick works flawlessly and should be used if available. Yet, the keyboard controls are otherwise easier to use, since gun tactics utilize rudder keys (,) extensively and the space bar is "just a shot away" as contrasted with keyboard/joystick contortions. Also, chaff and flares are extremely effective in missile avoidance, even though there is no sound or evidence that the flare/chaff has actually been released. Further, a campaign game is available, constituting successful completion of all missions. Although one is prompted to enter his name, the program still refers to him as "CPT Buck Ryan" throughout the campaign. Nevertheless, top scores are saved under the "correct name". Finally, there is an "edge of the world" syndrome. If an enemy tank exits the strategic map, one cannot catch up to it. Viewing it through the rangefinder shows the enemy vehicle "outdistancing" the A-10! Just be aware that the anomaly exists and, if it occurs, switch to an attainable target.

The mission mixture is somewhat abbreviated, with more emphasis on strike than close air support. However, **Dynamix** notes that an expansion module will be available in December for $12.95 (and such modules will be downloadable from the company's own BBS [503 687-8497] for free, albeit without documentation updates). The expansion module will consist of a substitute campaign with an additional seven missions.

Threat levels may be "wimp", "pretty mean suckers", or "major bad news", the last of which is most likely historical. The most realistic mission for an A-10 is probably the "Mother Hen" scenario. In this mission, one must protect four armored platoons in their drive to open a corridor through the SAM umbrellas. Once that is accomplished, the A-10 must then penetrate such corridor and destroy a supply dump. Time is of the essence; a missed pass with an enemy element may well doom a friendly platoon elsewhere on the front.

Conclusions

A-10 has much going for it. It is easy-to-use, attractive and fun. This is not a flight grognard's game, but if you are looking for a game which you can shake out of the box, boot up, and have a great deal of fun with, then *A-10* (Version 2.0) qualifies.

CGW

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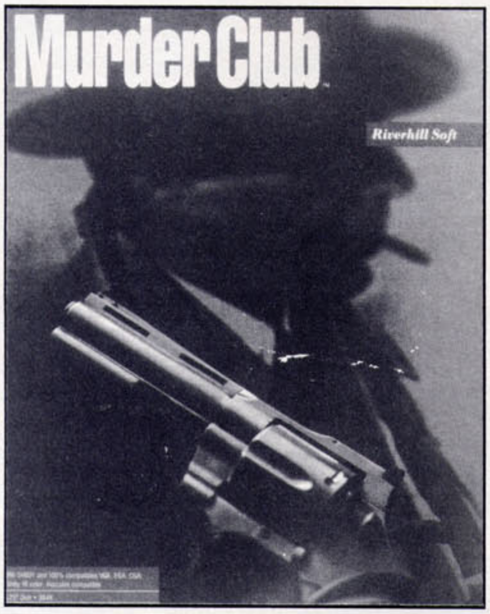
Kyodai's "Murder Club"

by Rocco (As Told To Dennis Owens)

Note: The writer of dis review would like to thank da wonderful, kind, intelligent, and generous members of da honorable local chapter of the Cement Shoemakers' Guild of America for da helpful assistance which dey didn't necessarily provide, but which if dey had provided would have been most valuable.

Moidah Club (Ed.: Murder Club*) is* **Kyodai**'s entry in dat long line of gumshoe potboilers such as Detective, Suspect, Twilight's Ransom, *etc. and it poifectly recreates the challenge of real-life investigative work. As detective J. B. Harold, da player inherits Liberty City's "most baffling moidah investigation", which, until his most unfoitunate heart attack, had been handled by Harold's partner.*

It seems dat local big fish in a small pond, Bill Robbins—womanizer, corporate shark extraordinaire—was found dead. To wit, dis poiticular poi-son was found stabbed in da back, having been obsoived by a security guard who saw little moih dan a blue car screeching off in the distance.



TITLE:	Murder Club
SYSTEM:	IBM
PRICE:	$39.95
DESIGNERS:	Riverhill Soft
PUBLISHER:	Kyodai Software San Rafael, CA

"Tell 'em about da coroner, Dennis!"

"At present," the coroner's report says, "the investigation is concentrating on the theory that Robbins was killed for reasons related to work or some personal grudge held against him." Unfortunately, as the player will soon find out, practically everyone to be interviewed has something they didn't like about Bill.

"Yeah," one character admits, "but was it enough to murder him for?" That is precisely what the player must figure out as he tries to untangle the hurt emotions and the guilt, the deceptions and the red herrings, and the motivations of everyone involved in Robbins' life.

Frankly, players won't receive much help in their attempts to piece together the events of that tragic night. The prosecutor wants evidence, hard evidence, and the crime lab will only tell the player what he has already figured out or explain the evidence which he has already brought in. In addition, the police library is almost useless. Players will only find a few seemingly unrelated stories there.

Of course, as everyone discovers quickly enough, *nothing* among the people one speaks with in Liberty City is unrelated and therein lies both one of the biggest faults of the game and one of its greatest strengths.

"Tell 'em about da choices, Dennis!"

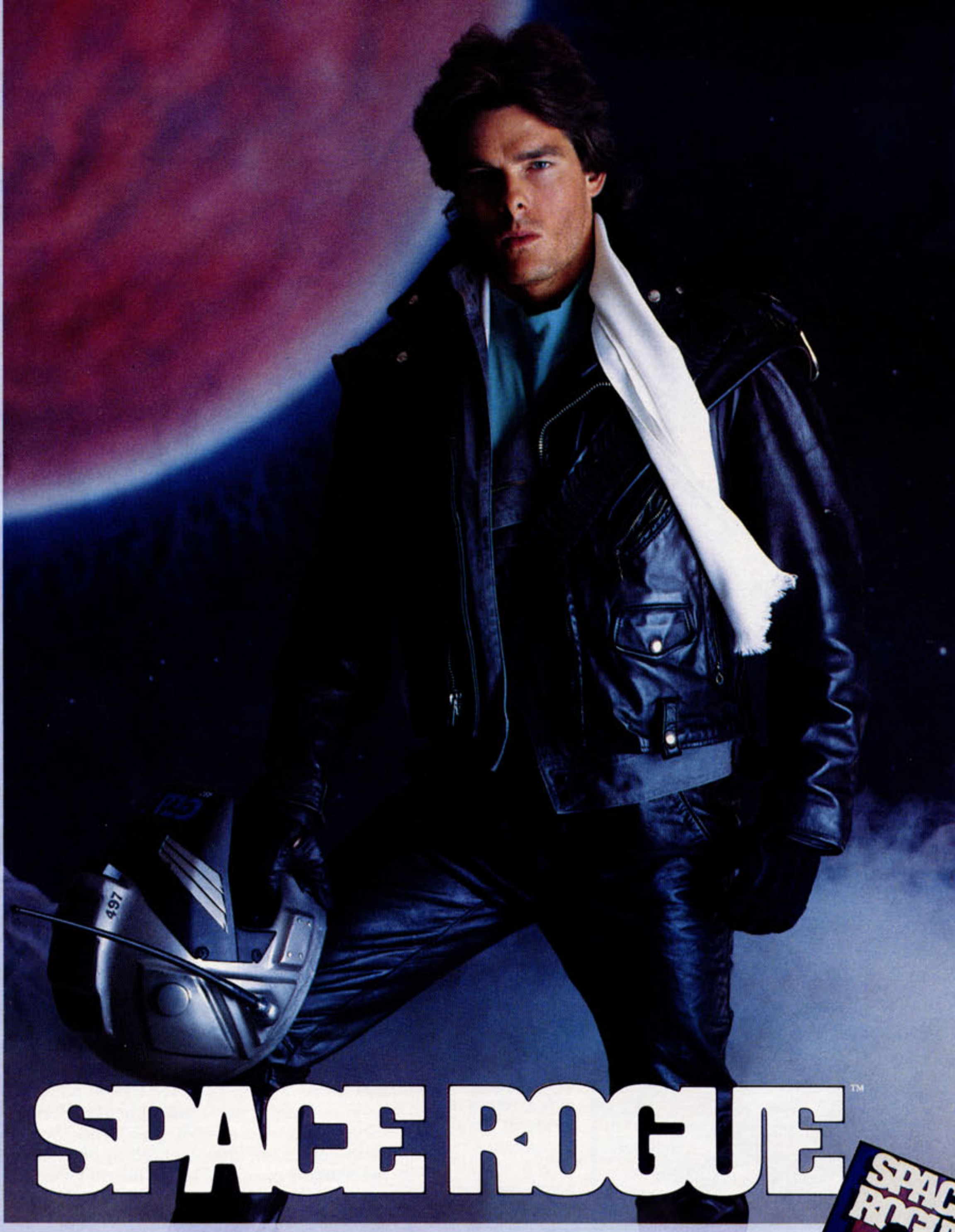
Murder Club is menu-driven and flows much like *Journey* or *A Mind Forever Voyaging* through selections which pop up as Detective Harold uncovers important information or performs certain acts. Though the graphics do include a rough map of the city, there are only a few places where the detective can go (accessed through the menus), only certain people who can be questioned, and only a few specific items which can be mentioned to them. Thus, irrelevant locations are left out; whimsical or impulsive acts are basically impossible; and, with the lack of invention, away flies any suspension of disbelief or sense of the world inside the machine which is so important to the more successful computer games.

Also lost, is the simulation of reality which the game seems to try so hard to create. Not simply an adventure story, *Murder Club* very vividly recreates the need for footwork—research and conversation—which lies at the heart of any police investigation. As in real-life sleuthing, most of the game is hard work—which is, in turn, both a blessing and a curse.

Murder Club is indeed a pleasant change to the usual shoot-'em-up, gather all the goodies type games. It does, at least, offer a chance for players to pretend they are smarter than the bad guys and imagine for a brief time that they are perceptive enough to be a detective. Imagine, that is, until they realize that it is impossible to go wrong. As long as the players direct the detective to talk to everyone possible and to search every location available, it is virtually impossible *not* to resolve the situation.

Murder Club becomes a race to talk to everyone before the player falls asleep from the repetition of key-pecking. Search warrants, arrest warrants, etc. will all be doled out when the detective

(Continued on page 95)





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GOOD KNIGHT, SWEET PRINCE

Broderbund's "Prince of Persia"

by Charles Ardai

Prince Valiant

The Sultan is away, fighting to keep barbarian feet on the proper side of the Tigris, and wouldn't you just know, his most trusted Grand Vizier has seized the throne. That dirty rat Jaffar's also seized the Sultan's daughter and demanded that she marry him. She's got an hour to say yes or to join her lover in the palace prison and in a death sentence.



TITLE:	Prince of Persia
SYSTEM:	Apple II (with 128K)
PRICE:	$34.95
DESIGNER:	Jordan Mechner
PUBLISHER:	Broderbund Software San Rafael, CA

Speaking of her lover (let's call him 'Errol Flynn,' just to pick a name at random), he's an ordinary guy, a wanderer from a foreign land who came to Persia and managed to steal the princess' heart. Only now he's underground and swordless, with a dungeon to escape from, a palace to infiltrate, a heavily guarded tower to conquer, and an hour to do it in. Three guesses which character you get to play.

Lots of things *could* kill our man Errol—a sword-blow, a three-story fall, impalement on a bed of spikes—but, wonder of wonders, a push of a button will fill his mangled corpse with life once more. This power of resuscitation is unlimited and extremely handy. There's nothing like a quick resurrection to take the sting out of losing a fight. The time limit, on the other hand, is *not* up for debate. An hour is an hour is an hour. At the end of an hour, Jaffar will track Errol down and kill him. Needless to say, when Jaffar kills someone, he stays dead.

In effect, then, Errol's enemy is Time Himself, the great foe of the old-time poets and of anyone stuck in rush-hour traffic. The old boy's got a labyrinth of chambers, hallways and ledges to explore; portcullises to lift; pits to leap; turbaned swordsmen to kill . . . and all this in a real-time hour. Isn't that cutting it a bit close?

No, says the game's 'User's Guide'. "Don't be afraid to explore, and to experiment. After all, you've got nothing to lose except your life, the Princess, and the entire Kingdom."

Gee, thanks.

Jordan vs. Persia: One Thousand And One

Never mind that a Sultan rules over a Sultanate, not a Kingdom.

Never mind that it makes no sense to have guards in a dungeon like this (How do they get there? How do they go home at night if the blasted thing's inescapable? How do they get food?

Never mind that the Sultan, who is off killing foreigners, would probably *prefer* to see his daughter married to Jaffar than to a rascally foreigner who's just killed several dozen of his best guards and his Grand Vizier.

I mean, really, did those old *Thief of Baghdad* movies make sense? The point is, they were loads of fun and *Prince of Persia* is loads of fun, too. You want *logic*, too? *Prince of Persia* is the brainchild of Jordan Mechner, the young author of *Karateka*. Curiously, *Prince* has less in common with Mechner's earlier game than with a much earlier Broderbund offering, *The Castles of Dr. Creep*. In that game, players explored rooms patterned after movies such as *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Here, players explore rooms patterned after *Ali Baba* and *The Arabian Nights*. Both games are characterized by an abundance of mechanical puzzles ("Which tile do I step on to raise the gate?", "How can I reach that ledge?", and so forth), as well as opulent, atmospheric graphics. Both also feature appropriate mood-enhancing soundtracks, though *Dr. Creep*'s Brahms is a shade better than Francis (*nepotism alert!*) Mechner's merely serviceable work in *Prince*.

The maze of rooms is extremely well-constructed in both games, giving players plenty to explore and plenty of apparent dead-ends to get themselves out of. However, *Prince of Persia* offers something additional (besides being available, which *Dr. Creep* is not). To quote the package, "[Mechner] breaks new ground with animation so uncannily human it must be seen to be believed." This would be the height of marketing arrogance if it weren't, quite simply, true.

Working from "hundreds of movie clips" and the digitized poses of three live models, Mechner has crafted the

(Continued on page 64)



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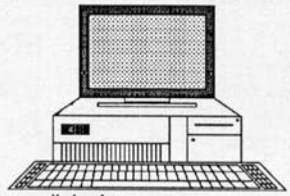
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See Reader Input Device on page 104

The Categories

Strategy (ST): Games that emphasize strategic planning and problem solving.

Simulation (SI): Games based on first person perspectives of real world environments.

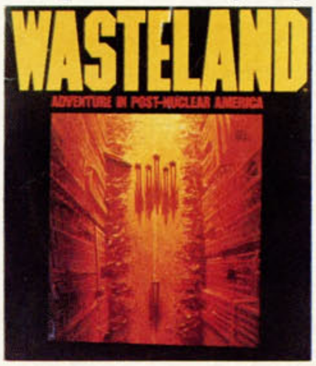
Adventure (AD): Games that allow you to take your alter ego through a storyline or series of events.

Role-Playing Adventures (RP): Adventure games that are based on character development (usually involving attributes).

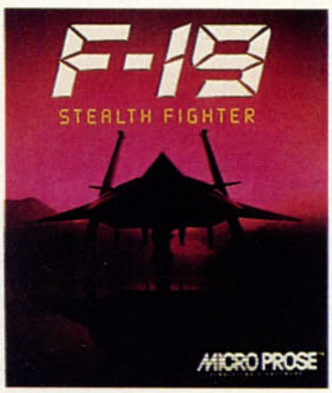
Wargames (WG): Simulations of historical or futuristic warfare from a command perspective.

Action/Arcade (AC): Computer games that emphasize hand-eye coordination and reflexes.

Top Role-Playing



Top Simulation



THE TOP TEN GAMES

No.	Name	Mfg.	Machine	Cat.	Avg. # Resp.	Rating
1.	*F-19 Stealth Fighter*	*MicPr*	*I*	*SI*	*72*	*9.89*
2.	*SimCity*	*Maxis*	*Am,C,I,M*	*ST,SI*	*47*	*9.59*
3.	*Populous*	*EA*	*Am,ST*	*ST*	*56*	*9.41*
4.	*Battlehawks 1942*	*LucasFilm*	*Am,I,ST*	*AC,SI*	*72*	*9.32*
	Red Storm Rising	*MicPr*	*C,I*	*SI*	*56*	*9.32*
6.	*Lords of Rising Sun*	*Cnmwre*	*Am*	*AC,ST*	*47*	*9.30*
7.	*Wasteland*	*EA*	*Ap,C,I*	*RP*	*109*	*9.15*
8.	*Pool of Radiance*	*SSI*	*Ap,C,I*	*RP*	*100*	*9.14*
9.	*Ultima V*	*Origin*	*Ap,I*	*RP*	*99*	*9.11*
10.	*Might & Magic II*	*NwWrld*	*Ap,I,C*	*RP*	*46*	*9.04*

No.	Name	Mfg.	Machines	Cat.	Avg # Resp.	Rating
11.	Bard's Tale III	EA	Ap,C	RP	74	9.03
12.	Space Quest III	Sierra	I,Am	AD	34	8.97
13.	Romance/3Kngdms	Koei	I	ST,RP	31	8.96
14.	Overrun	SSI	Ap,I	WG	21	8.95
15.	Battles of Napoleon	SSI	Ap,C	WG	30	8.87
	NFL Challenge	XOR	I,M	ST	86	8.87
17.	The Magic Candle	Mndcrft	Ap,C,I	RP	43	8.80
18.	Genghis Khan	Koei	I	ST,RP	32	8.79
	Project Stealth Ftr	MicPr	C	SI	29	8.79
20.	Battletech	Infocom	Am,I,ST	RP	48	8.77
	Fire Brigade	Panther	Am,I,M	WG	22	8.77
22.	Airborne Ranger	MicPr	C,I,ST	AC	74	8.76
	Curse of Azure Bonds	SSI	C,I	RP	52	8.76
23.	King's Quest IV	Sierra	Many	AD	58	8.75
25.	Falcon	SpcHolo	Many	SI	61	8.73
26.	Rocket Ranger	Cnmwre	Am,ST	AC,AD	74	8.71
27.	Neuromancer	Interplay	Ap,C	AD	31	8.70
28.	Battlechess	Interplay	Am,I,ST	ST	58	8.68
29.	Typhoon of Steel	SSI	Ap,C	WG	43	8.67
30.	Ballistyx	Psygns	Am,ST	AC	20	8.65
	Police Quest II	Sierra	I,GS	AD	43	8.65
	Zany Golf	EA	Am,I,ST	AC	31	8.65
33.	Sword of Sodan	Discvry	Am,GS	AC	27	8.63
34.	Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei	I	ST,RP	51	8.53
35.	Carrier Command	Rainbird	Am,I,ST	AC,WG	49	8.51
	Panzer Strike	SSI	Ap,C	WG	68	8.51
37.	Silent Service	MicPr	Many	SI	257	8.50
38.	Hostage	Mndscpe	Am,I,ST	AC	28	8.47
39.	688 Attack Sub	EA	I	SI,ST	48	8.42
40.	Arkanoid	Dsc/Taito	Many	AC	69	8.38
	Wings of Fury	Brdbnd	Ap	AC	52	8.38
42.	Strike Fleet	EA	Ap,C,I	WG	79	8.37
43.	Leisure Suit Lry II	Sierra	I,GS,ST	AD	52	8.31
	TV Sports Football	Cnmwre	Am	AC,ST	48	8.31
45.	Modem Wars	EA	C,I	ST	24	8.29
46.	Manhunter	Sierra	Many	AD	72	8.25
47.	Police Quest	Sierra	Many	AD	98	8.23
48.	Starglider II	Rainbird	Am,ST	AC	65	8.22
49.	Jack Nicklaus' Golf	Acclde	Am,C,I	AC,ST	28	8.21
	Three Stooges	Cnmwre	Am,C	AC	68	8.21
51.	Battlegroup	SSI	Ap,C	WG	36	8.19
52.	Abrams Battle Tank	EA	I	AC,SI	31	8.16
53.	Tetris	SpcHolo	Many	AC,ST	46	8.13
54.	Stealth Mission	Sublogic	C	SI	36	8.11
55.	Shiloh	SSI	Ap,C,I	WG	54	8.09

THE HALL OF FAME

The Games In CGW's Hall Of Fame Have Been Highly Rated By Our Readers Over Time. They Are Worthy Of Play By All.

Bard's Tale I
Chessmaster
Dungeon Master
Earl Weaver Baseball
Empire
Gettysburg
Gunship
Kampfgruppe
Mech Brigade
Might & Magic
M.U.L.E.
Pirates
Starflight
Ultima III
Ultima IV
War in Russia
Wizardry

No.	Name	Mfg.	Machines	Cat.	Avg # Resp.	Rating
	Zork Series	Infocom	Many	AD	218	8.09
57.	Faery Tale Adventure	Micllsn	Many	RP	59	8.07
58.	Speedball	Cnmware	Am,C,I	AC	35	8.06
59.	Russia	SSG	Ap,C	WG	61	8.05
60.	Sentinel Worlds	EA	I	RP	71	8.04
	Techno-Cop	Epyx	C	AC	23	8.04
62.	Test Drive II	Acclde	Am,C	AC	42	8.02
63.	WC Leader Board	Access	Many	AC,ST	97	8.00
64.	Leather Goddesses	Infocom	Many	AD	136	7.99
65.	Breach	Omntrnd	Am,M,ST	ST,RP	114	7.98
66.	Enchanter	Infocom	Many	AD	115	7.97
67.	Jordan vs Bird	EA	C,I	AC	47	7.96
68.	Prophecy	Activsn	Am,I	AD	32	7.92
69.	Wizardry V	Sir-Tech	Ap,I	RP	43	7.88
70.	Eternal Dagger	SSI	Many	RP	72	7.85
71.	Manhunter 2	Sierra	I	AD	26	7.81
72.	Rommel	SSG	Ap,C	WG	20	7.80
73.	Halls of Montezuma	SSG	Many	WG	44	7.75
74.	Anc Art of War At Sea	Brdbnd	I,M	ST	108	7.74
	Phantasie III	SSI	Many	RP	105	7.74
76.	Phantasie	SSI	Many	RP	147	7.69
77.	Star Saga I	Mstrply	Many	AD	37	7.66
78.	War in Middle Earth	Melbrne	Many	ST	57	7.65
79.	Bard's Tale II	EA	Many	RP	166	7.64
80.	Grand Prix	Acclde	Am,I,M	AC	46	7.63
81.	Sorceror	Infocom	Many	AD	71	7.62
	Spellbreaker	Infocom	Many	AD	93	7.62
	Wizard's Crown	SSI	Many	RP	133	7.62
84.	Dec. Battles III	SSG	Ap,C	WG	23	7.57
	Hitchhiker's Guide	Infocom	Many	AD	198	7.57
86.	Balance of Power	Mndscpe	Many	ST	70	7.55
	Gold Rush	Sierra	I,ST,M	AD	20	7.55
88.	Demon Stalkers	EA	C	AC,AD	57	7.54
89.	Shadowgate	Mndscpe	Many	AD	66	7.53
90.	Quarterstaff	Infocom	M	RP	23	7.52
	Wishbringer	Infocom	Many	AD	81	7.52
92.	Legacy of Ancients	EA	AP,C,I	RP	134	7.50
	Silpheed	Sierra	I	AC	22	7.50
94.	Planetfall	Infocom	Many	AD	139	7.49
95.	Battlecruiser	SSI	Ap,At,C	WG	42	7.48
96.	Reach For Stars	SSG	Many	ST	38	7.45
97.	Autoduel	Origin	Ap	RP	175	7.44
98.	Heroes of the Lance	SSI	Am,C,I	AC,AD	77	7.43
	King's Quest II	Sierra	AP,I	AD	115	7.43
100.	Defender of Crown	Cnmware	Many	AC,ST	253	7.39

Top Strategy



Top Action/Arcade



Top Adventure

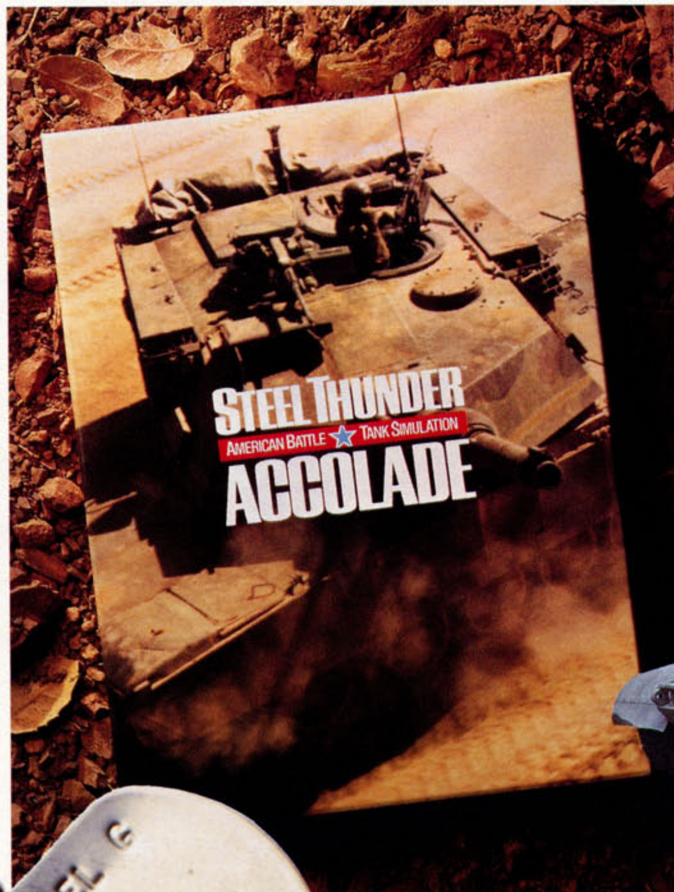


Top Wargame



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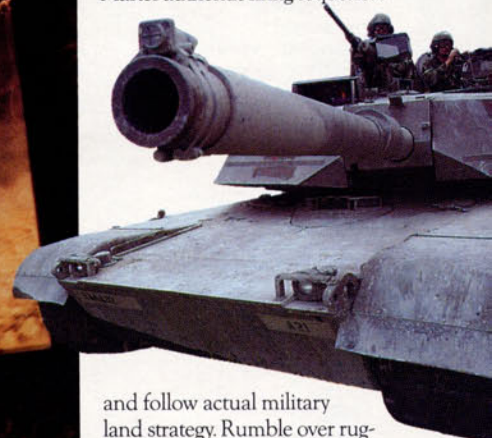


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Actual game screens from IBM PC EGA version of the game. Other versions may vary.

(Continued from page 36)

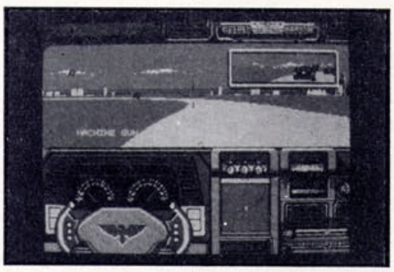
D A V I D WOLF

player gets to fire guns and missiles and drop oil slicks to shake pursuing cars, there are many other driving games on the market, and most are, at least, as good as this one. A sense of repetition is further heightened by the placement of the second driving sequence immediately after the first.

The hang-gliding segment suffers from the most awkward controls of the game—it is almost impossible to aim the guns and, as in real life, the hang-glider is difficult to steer laterally without a dangerous loss of altitude. It doesn't help that this is the very first segment in the game, nor that the objective isn't clear. Is Wolf supposed to shoot down the enemy hang-gliders (he does have a gun, after all)? Is he supposed to evade them or simply land somewhere in particular? The hang-glider sequence gets the game underway on a strange, uncertain note.

Piloting the stealth bomber, on the other hand, is the game's climactic challenge. It isn't easy either, but one wouldn't want it to be. The controls are simpler than the real thing but complex enough to give the simulation some depth. This segment comes off well.

By far the best segments, however, are the two most unusual, where the player actually gets to participate in hands-on, non-vehicular, movie action. First, after bailing out of an exploding plane without a parachute, Wolf has to catch the freefalling villain who does have one. Then, he has to steer the parachute so that he lands on a truck passing on the highway beneath him. The controls in these segments are transparent (in the sense that they make intuitive sense and don't interfere with the action) and the situations are exciting. These two sequences also work well because their goals not only tie in with the plot, but are immediately evident. I have already noted the uncertain goal of the first segment; but the car chases also go on and on with no convenient way for the player to know when they will end. Even in the stealth sequence where the goal is explicitly to fly a stolen bomber back to the United States, there is no gauge to show how much progress one has made.



None of the segments are bad in and of themselves. In fact, they all hit a solid level of good. However, the excellent parachute sequences are too slight to carry the game by themselves. If this is the sort of material **Dynamix** will work with (and I think it should be), they will need at least a dozen such segments per game, if not more. The vehicle sequences are meaty enough to carry a game, but there the problem is both quality and originality. A player who wants a driving game, or a flight simulator, will do better to get a game exclusively devoted to that pursuit. The animation will probably be smoother, the controls more responsive, the options more extensive, and the world of the simulation better developed. The inevitable result of trying to package several different simulations in one product is that none are as good as they might be. It is very much to **Dynamix**'s credit that all the sequences are as good as they are.

***The opening scene (preceding the hang-glider segment) is tightly written and crackles with wittier dialogue than we've seen in the last three* Bond films.**

The scene opens on a well-fed, goateed villain issuing instructions for David Wolf's *elimination*. Cut to the opening credits, which are set against a backdrop of slick silhouettes: a sports car, a spyplane, a sexy woman. As the credits end, a male silhouette walks on-screen and the female silhouette spins, walks across the screen, and embraces him. Think "James Bond". *David Wolf, Secret Agent* wants very badly to be a James Bond movie. All the elements are there: the tuxedo-clad man of action who is quick with a gun, a woman, or a wry one-liner; the agent's solid, anxious Director who lays out the scenario; the beautiful, kidnapped scientist; the megalomaniacal villain with plans to hold the White House hostage; the henchmen and thugs;

(Continued on page 85)

(Continued from page 26)

M1 TANK PLATOON

on the contemporary battlefield is fatal!! Use it early and use it often!!

Platoon Formation: Learn to use platoon formations and when not to. Generally, it is more beneficial to leave a covering force ("You move, I'll cover!") and use bounding overwatch. However, while the platoon leader can give orders to all four tanks, one must issue orders separately when the formation is split. Move, regroup, move again, and use terrain to maximize cover and concealment (cover affords protection from enemy fire, while concealment merely hides one from enemy observation). While placing one's tank in hull defilade position, remember to adjust the other tanks individually. In a line formation, while tank 1 may be perfectly positioned, but other tanks may be too far forward or back. Therefore, one must shift to each tank and place it in the most advantageous position. Finally, do not give the "Fire at Will" command prematurely. Tankers have a tendency to use up ammunition quickly and the computer is no exception.

Use of Artillery: Artillery fires can be quickly brought to bear. However, M1 does not allow shifting of fires or preselected firing points. Once a target is selected, it will be engaged until the artillery unit has executed its fire mission. In a mobile battlefield, this can occasionally prove non-optimal. Thus, one must decide when and where to employ off-map support to the best advantage.

Interestingly enough, the Soviet forces seem to lack the mainstay of Soviet arms—i.e. massive artillery. Historically, the Red Army has utilized massed artillery preparatory fires to disrupt and destroy enemy forces. These artillery fires are not present in the game, presumably since there is not much entertainment value in digging down into the dirt for hours while the universe seemingly explodes.

Conclusion

There is no question that *M1 Tank Platoon* is the best armor simulator currently available on the market. A richly-faceted gaming experience, it does portray the interdependence of the various combat arms. Playable upon different levels (individual or platoon), its campaign options offer hours of entertainment. *[Ed: The outside tank view provides some of the most thrilling views of game play we have ever seen in a computer game. It is nothing short of outstanding!]* **CGW**

(Continued from page 28)

MechWarrior

type of planet is important because heat will dissipate more effectively on an arctic planet). At this point, he must decide: which direction to move and how fast to do so; whether to take cover behind available terrain or challenge the enemy in the open; which enemy to target; and what weapon to use, as well as when to fire it.

The combat is consistent with the boardgame with one noteworthy exception. As in the fiction excerpted above, the boardgame rules apply a formula for heat build-up in proportion to movement. The *MechWarrior* design team felt that this heat build-up made the simulation less enjoyable and held back the action for no useful purpose. Therefore, they designed the simulation so that heat build-up is strictly a result of weapon fire and/or taking damage. Purists may resent the design team taking this liberty, but the combat moves more swiftly to its thundering conclusions without having that rule in place.

Player characters will face light 'Mechs (Locusts, Jenners, and Phoenix Hawks), medium 'Mechs (Shadow Hawks and Riflemen), and heavy 'Mechs (Warhammers, Marauders, and Battlemasters) armed with machine guns, lasers of various intensities, autocannons, short range missiles and particle projection cannons (PPCs). Each one takes shape as the range between mercenary team and enemy 'Mechs closes and the overall effect is incredible. **Dynamix** has worked their 3-D technological magic in developing *MechWarrior* for **Activision** and the result is a database full of three-dimensional enemies that can be easily recognized and logically engaged. One doesn't get the feeling he is fighting geometrical shapes. Rather it seems like these 31st Century engines of destruction are heading right at one's own cockpit. Also, the fast scrolling terrain and realistic way it affects one's speed and aim is some of the best technological wizardry we've yet seen in a simulation. Players get a tremendous verisimilitude of depth and horizon when marching one's 'Mech over small slopes and rises or using the 'Mechs jump jets to fly above the action.

Dan dropped the Wolfhound to one knee, raised the right arm, and targeted the golden crosshairs at the ravine mouth across from him.

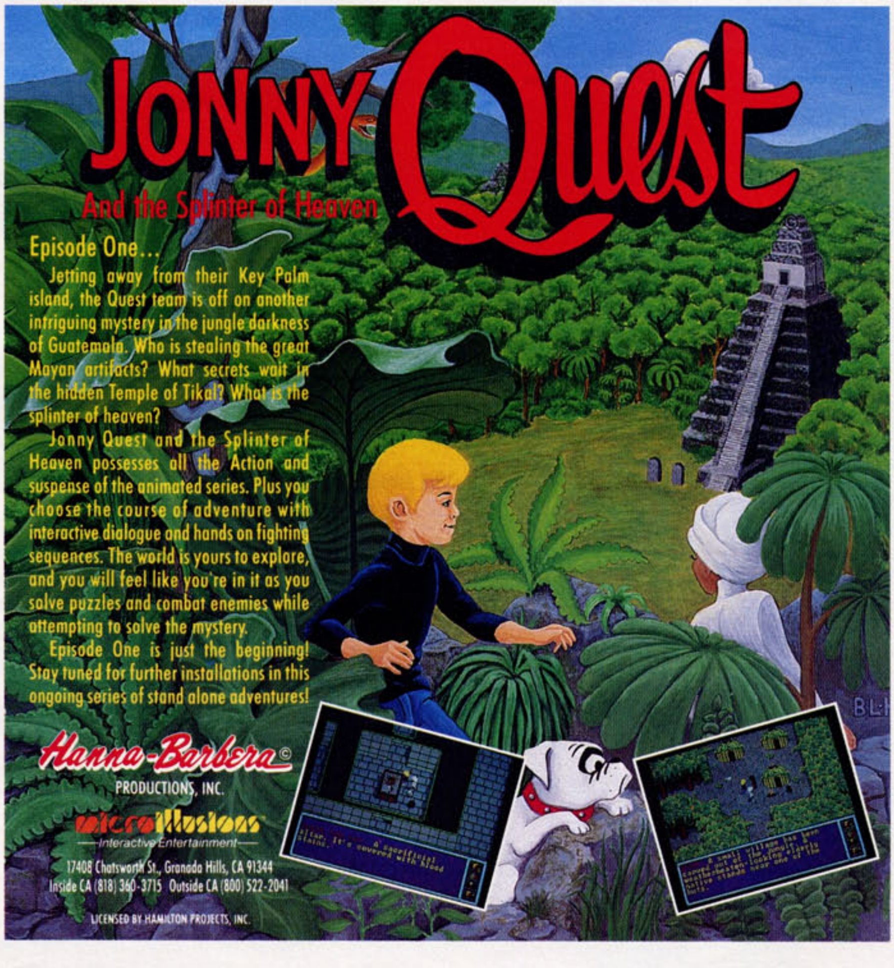
When the lead Panther was impaled on Dan's sights, he triggered his large laser. As sheets of armor vanished from the 'Mech's right flank, the Panther twisted to the left to protect its wounded side and then ducked back beneath cover.

—Michael A. Stackpole,
Warrior: Riposte

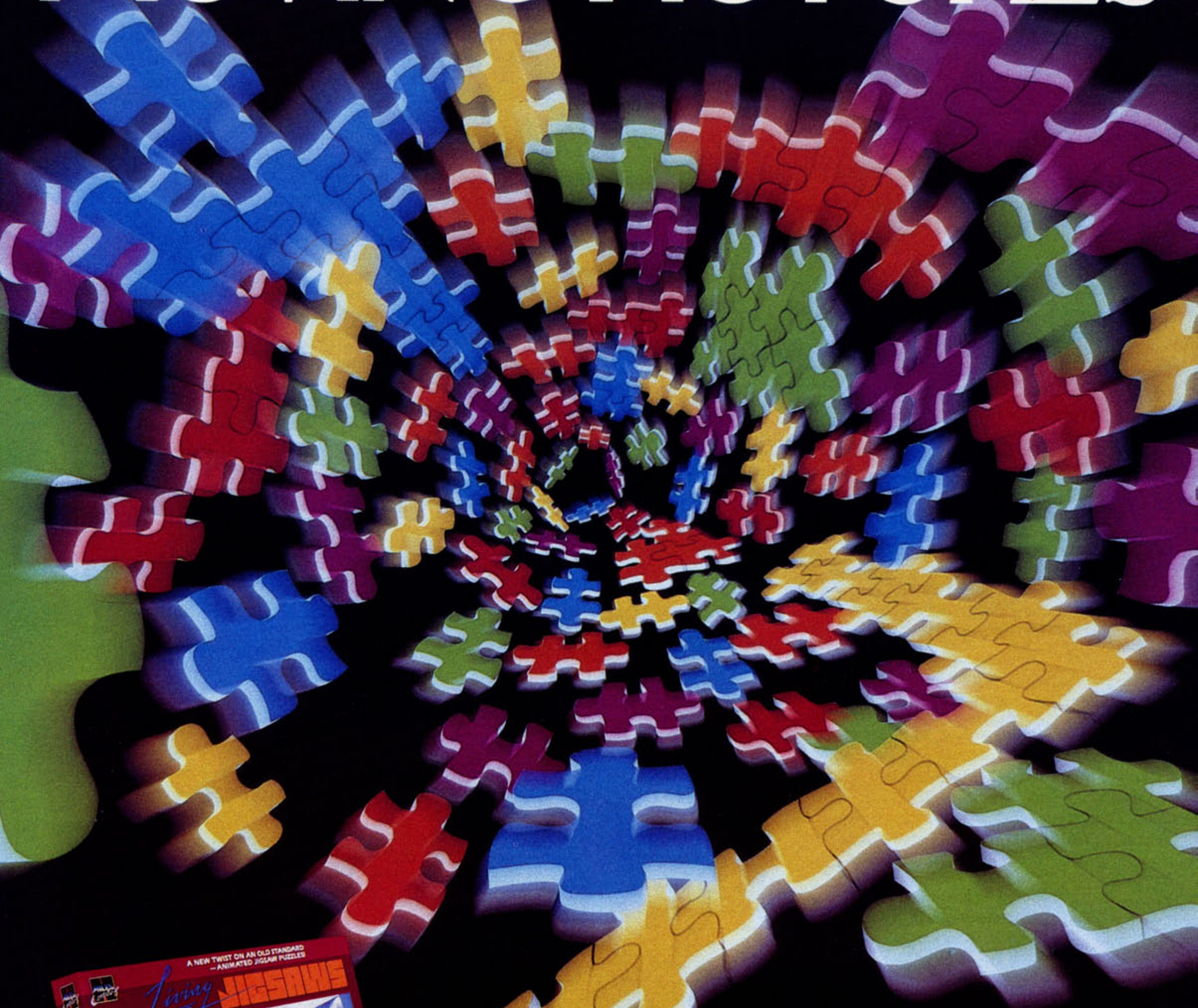
MechWarrior doesn't actually use "golden" crosshairs, but it does utilize an extremely intuitive targeting system. When the player sees shapes moving at a distance, he simply hits the "Enter" key and a green rectangle will appear on the screen, surrounding an enemy 'Mech or installation (Note: If he "targets" a friendly 'Mech by mistake, the user-friendly simulation provides a double rectangle to alert the player to potential disaster). This allows him to target that enemy or hit the "Enter" key yet again in order to move to a different target. If he is uncertain as to whether he has effectively targeted his opponent, he can "zoom in" an additional two magnifications. This simulates the work of the sensors present within every BattleMech. Should the sensors be damaged, the MechWarrior will find himself "blind" while the battle continues unabated all around him.

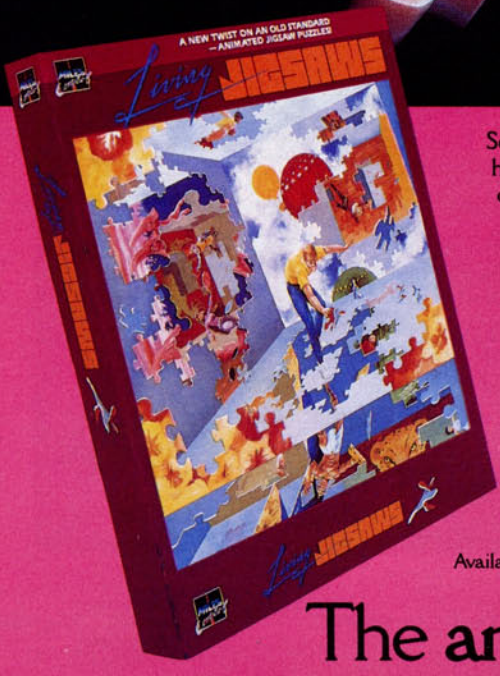
Strategies in *MechWarrior* are actually rather straightforward. As in the boardgame, the first tactical rule (as well as Rules #2-#4) is "Never Stand Still" (noted in "Battle 'Mech Tactics" by Steve Kerry in *Breakout!* magazine, March-May, 1988). Also, a la the boardgame, lighter 'Mechs will want to use their speed to get behind the medium and heavy machines in order to blast away at their weaker back armor with impunity.

(Continued on page 77)



MOVING PICTURES





So, you take a proven classic, add a new and exciting twist, and what have you got? *Living Jigsaws* – the animated jigsaw puzzle game. Not only is it a successful translation of a traditional game into computer software, it adds an element of surprise that both enhances and improves the original. Imagine picking up jigsaw pieces that change as you try to place them, characters and objects move from one to another as you position them, waterfalls cascade, walls seem to vibrate with color, and a mysterious wizard blows bubbles into an illusory scene. It's an intriguing enhancement, a fascinating premise, and with the quality of artwork this package contains, it is a stunning success.

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MILES Computing

Is UFO For Real?

SubLOGIC Flings a Flying Saucer Simulator At Us

by Daniel Hockman

What do you do when you have the most incredible flight simulation program? The one that has set the standard for the whole industry? If you want to make more money, you might try to clone it into a few games/simulations that use the same award winning technology. Right? Well, that's what **SubLOGIC** is trying to do with two new releases: *UFO* and *Flight Simulator A.T.P.* (Air Transport Pilot). The latter product is scheduled for a December release. The former was released in late October.

UFO is a very interesting idea for a computer game. You are in command of an alien flying saucer. Your goal is to harvest Q-energy (rare throughout most of the galaxy but, wouldn't you just know it, common on earth!). Q-energy is found in population centers and particularly in sizable buildings. Oddly enough the documentation omits an important fact that game play is built upon: Q-energy is released when humans experience fear. Thus, your task is to terrorize the populations of large cities (especially in large buildings where people are concentrated) so as to raise the fear level and harvest the resulting Q-energy. It's a lot of fun to watch the UFO in the demo program terrorize Washington D.C. You watch as little colored balls (representing Q-energy) slowly drift up to the UFO from the White House and the Pentagon. The gang at **SubLOGIC** certainly do have a sense of humor.

There are two games in *UFO*: "Energy Trader" and "Earth Craft Chase". Energy Trader is pretty much described in the preceding paragraph. In Earth Craft Chase you are given a limited amount of time to follow and terrorize a number of human aircraft. You get points by following close and even more points if you can successfully "scoop" them up with your graviton tractor beam. Be careful not to turn the beam up too high or you might destroy the aircraft (messy!). There is a certain sinister glee one has when you start chasing a fear ridden human pilot all over the sky. And you just know what he's thinking when you turn your craft skyward and shoot out of the atmosphere in mere seconds.

Speaking of leaving the atmosphere, part of the game is played in low earth orbit (where your mothership is parked, 240 klaks (.94 klaks equal 1 mile) above Southern Florida. The views of the U.S. you get from here are spectacular (see photo).

Unfortunately, this is a very frustrating part of the game. Docking with the mothership is a bear. To be frank, I have only succeeded twice in dozens of attempts (and I consider myself pretty dextrous at these things). Even when I pay the 1500 energy unit penalty which allows me to transport to anywhere in the U.S. (in this case the threshold of the mothership's docking bay), I rarely can get that blasted craft to successfully dock. It is a *real* challenge. Beyond the problems with learning (if ever) to dock your craft is the fact that you will have to spend several hours just learning to get around. A flying saucer does not fly in the same fashion as all those flight simulators you have played before. The aerodynamics are different. The game accurately reflects this. Therefore you will have to learn some new skills. Using a mouse provides the best control. Learning to fly the ship will be a challenge for some; for others, a distracting frustration.



Obviously the scenery in *UFO* comes from the **SubLOGIC** *Flight Simulator* scenery modules. Four of the most detailed scenery areas from **SubLOGIC**'s scenery library are used in the game as the four most concentrated areas for Q-energy (Miami, Washington D.C., San Francisco, Hawaii). Thus most of the game will be played in areas of highly detailed scenery (isn't that a nice coincidence?). Don't expect much from other areas. Outside of the four major Q-energy sources you will get little more than city boundary polygons. Not even Chicago (the highly detailed starting point in **subLOGIC**'s *Flight Simulators*) gets decent treatment. No buildings, no O'Hare International, no Meigs Field! No nothin' (just a Chicago shaped flat polygon). What a letdown!

NAME:	UFO
SYSTEMS:	IBM 512K. CGA/EGA/VGA
PRICE:	$49.95
DESIGNERS:	Bruce Artwick Hugo Feugen
PUBLISHER:	SubLOGIC Champaign, IL 61820

Conclusions



UFO needs an option for easy mothership docking and some generic buildings for each of the urban areas.

I wanted to like this game. It has very colorful graphics (the cockpit screen is vibrant), the views from space are spectacular, and the idea behind the game is not only unique (a rare enough occurrence in this hobby), it is fun and engaging. But the difficulty in docking the spacecraft coupled with the fact that most U.S. cities are nothing more than flat polygon terrain left me disappointed.

On the other hand, the game *is* unique. There is nothing else like it on the market. If you want something *different*, can live with polygon cities, *and* are willing to tackle some truly difficult flight demands you might want to give *UFO* a try. **CGW**

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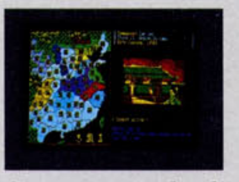
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IBM & Compatibles, Amiga

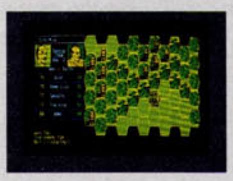
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- Two Scenarios, five levels of play
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IBM & Compatibles

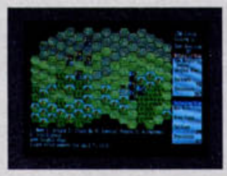
Genghis Khan

Conquests Of Love And War



Features Include:
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Destroy your enemies in battle, or by assassination, while you keep your populace happy, your treasury full, and your subordinates loyal. A seduced princess can produce heirs to govern conquered territories.

Finalist:
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Computer Gaming World Magazine

IBM & Compatibles, Amiga

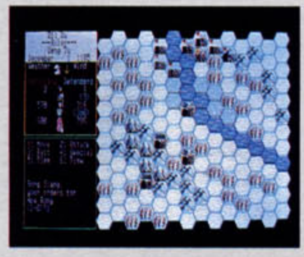
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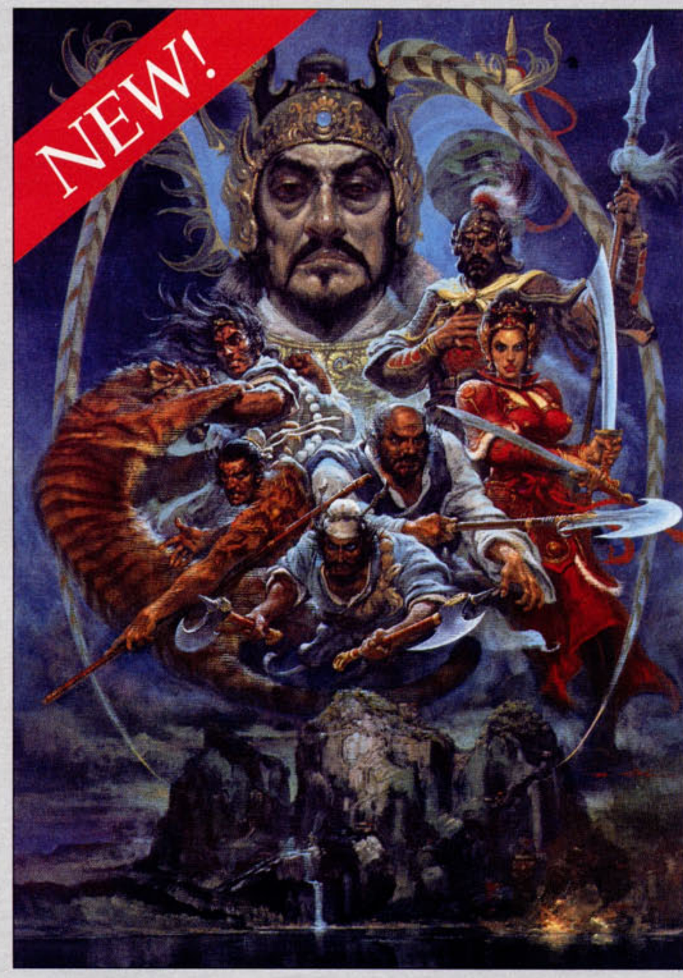








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Features Include:

- Four separate scenarios;
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But Gao Qiu, the evil Minister of War, will use his considerable power to destroy you unless you get to him first. And if things weren't bad enough, the northern border is swarming with barbarians, bent on taking the Empire's riches for their own.

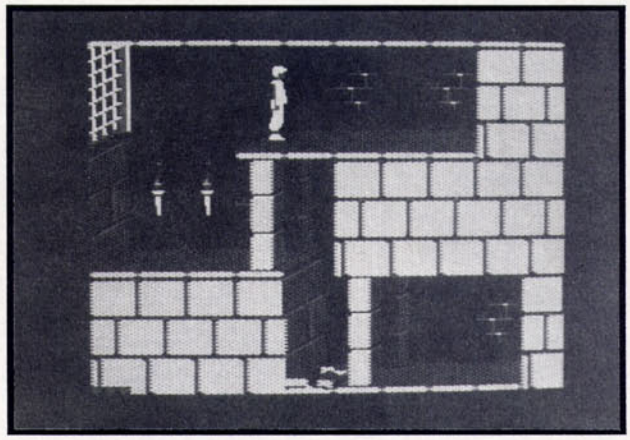
KOEI

Koei Corporation, One Bay Plaza, Suite 540,1350 Bayshore Highway Burlingame, CA 94010, Tel. 415-348-0500

Circle Reader Service #63

(Continued from page 48)

PRINCE of PERSIA



smoothest animation ever seen in a game of this type. Errol runs, he creeps, he leaps and ducks, he hangs by his fingertips—and he looks like a real person doing it. Jaffar and the princess, who are seen in animated sequences throughout the game, turn and strut, cry, shake fists, make dramatic gestures—and they look like real people doing it. Playing *Prince of Persia* will simply spoil you for any game whose designers couldn't be bothered to put this much effort into their product. There's no new technology here, just imagination, elbow grease, hours at the keyboard and TLC. Jordan Mechner deserves all the praise he's going to get for this one.

Prince of Persia succeeds at being more than a running-jumping game (in other words, a gussied-up Nintendo game) because it captures the *feel* of those great old adventure films. In reality, a running-jumping game *is* what it is (there's a good deal of sword combat, too), but within that genre, *Prince of Persia* is a tremendous achievement.

Make no mistake. *Prince of Persia* is the lightest of light entertainment. There's no great brain-drain here and no social commentary. But what people too often forget is how difficult it is to be 'merely' entertaining and just how much fun 'light entertainment' can be. *Star Wars* was light entertainment, after all, and *Prince of Persia* is the *Star Wars* of its field. **CGW**

Circle Reader Service #65



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(Continued from page 6)

can also purchase little 'goodies' from Dr. Kadaver to even up the odds a bit. And speaking of odds, players can increase their fight purse by wagering on their own fights. Of course you're wagering that you'll win, 'taking a dive' will only get your arms ripped off! IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #5.

SHANGHAI: An updated version of the old classic, this new version provides 3-D Tiles, Digitized Sound Effects and Music, Full Mac II Color Support, an Identify Tile Option, Faster Tile Removal, and several other features that let the player play solo, tournament or time games. Mac ($29.95 or $13.00 for an earlier version upgrade). Circle Reader Service #6.

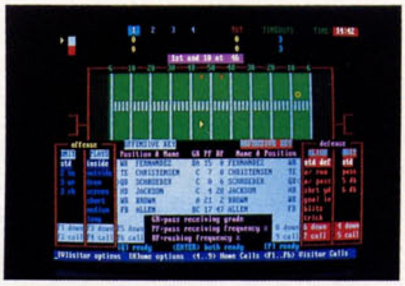
APBA Game Co.
1001 Millersville Rd.
P.O. Box 4547
Lancaster, PA 17604-4547

APBA PRO BOWLING: If watching WBF bowling tournaments is your favorite Saturday afternoon activity, this product might be for you. Ten-pen fanatics can choose 2-4 professional bowlers from a list of 48, set up a match, tourney, even an entire season, and watch them bowl it out. The pros will play their game, each with their individual strengths and weaknesses, and will nearly duplicate their actual life-time results. It's useful for recreating a season, but there isn't much "game" to it. IBM. Circle Reader Service #7.

APBA PRO LEAGUE FOOTBALL: The classic board game (played since 1958) comes to the computer. Players can coach face-to-face, against the computer, or just watch the game unfold in this stat-based football game. The game comes with all the bells and whistles you'd expect from APBA, and even includes a season stat compiler for league freaks. IBM. Circle Reader Service #8.

Box Office, Inc.
336 Robert Street, Suite 1202
St. Paul, MN 55101

RINGLING BROS. AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS GAMES: Players get to enter the Big Top and perform Trick Horse Riding, High Wire stunts, Tiger Taming, or tackle the Trapeze in this action game. Perform individual events or enter the International Competition and compete in all four events. Amiga. Circle Reader Service #9.



APBA Pro Football



Circus Games



Dark Heart of Uukrul



Joan of Arc



License to Kill



Moriarty's Revenge

Broderbund Software
17 Paul Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903-2101

THE DARK HEART OF UUKRUL: Players enter the underground city of Eriosthe and must fight their way through the twisty mazes that hide the tyrant Uukrul and his evil minions. The usual assortment of weapons and armor combine with some interesting magic and prayers to add lots of depth to this role-playing adventure. Auto-mapping, graphic tactical combat, and puzzles enrich the game. Apple II family (128K) ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #10.

LICENSE TO KILL: 007 is out for revenge in this action game that closely follows the movie. Players track down Sanchez the drug kingpin, fighting him with attack-copters, planes, and tankers, and performing typical Bond feats like water-skiing on bare feet and making an in-flight jump from a helicopter to a plane. Just another day in the Queen's Service. IBM ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #11.

JOAN OF ARC: SIEGE AND THE SWORD: Return to the days of the Hundred Year's War and take the throne of Charles VII of France. Can you change history and rid the land of traitorous French dukes and the hated English? At first glance, this product looks much like a *Defender of the Crown* clone, yet it turns out to be a much more detailed strategy game with an interesting diplomacy element (and some very tough action sequences

(Continued on page 68)

Circle Reader Service #66 »



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A space fleet of nearly unimaginable size and power is moving toward Earth. Their hatred knows no bounds. Methodically, they conquer every world in their path.

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STAR SAGA:TWO T.M.

THE CLATHRAN MENACE

MasterPLAY

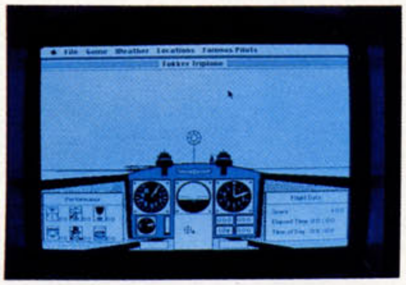
PUBLISHING CORPORATION

Games That Go To Your Head

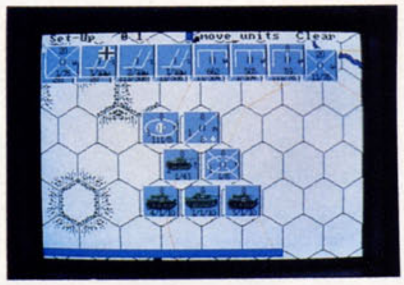
Available for Apple II Family, Apple IIGS, Tandy and IBM-PC and Compatibles.

STAR SAGA: TWO is a trademark of Masterplay Publishing Corporation, 8417 Sun State Street, Tampa, FL 33614 (813)-888-7773)

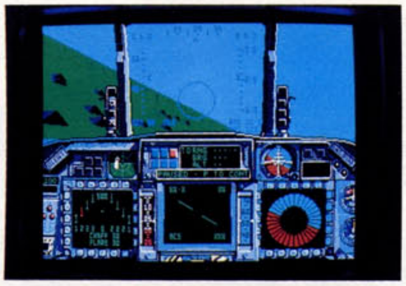
(Continued from page 66)



Fokker Triplane



White Death



F-16 Combat Pilot



Keef the Thief



Powerdrome



Mines of Titan

thrown in for flavor). In all, a good simulation of medieval kingsmanship. IBM (pictured) ($44.95), Amiga, & St. Circle Reader Service #12.

Bull City Software
P.O. Box 51816
Durham, N.C. 27717

MORIARTY'S REVENGE: Players join the Scotland Yard Irregulars, a group of international agents on the trail of criminals from ten secret societies, in this educational/adventure game. Much like Broderbund's *Carmen SanDiego* series, players must unravel geographical clues as they track criminals across the globe. Includes a *Rand McNally Pocket World Atlas* used in the detective work. Mac ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #13.

Bullseye Software
P.O. Box 7900
Incline Village, NV 89450

FOKKER TRIPLANE FLIGHT SIMULATOR: An all new re-release, this WWI flight simulator's new features include digitized sound, better graphics, control of enemy flying and bombing. Missions include balloon busting, demolition of enemy fuel dumps, and bombing runs. Six different airbases are available for stationing. Mac ($45.00). Circle Reader Service #14.

Command Simulations
Bldg 3, 297 North Street
Hyannis, MA 02601

WHITE DEATH: The player gets a chance to play the computer game adapted from **GDW**'s award winning board game of the battle at Velikiyi Luki (Russian front, winter 1942-43). Six scenarios, modem option, bunkers, morale, commandos, weather, rockets, barrage, garrisons, etc. A detailed wargame for the operational East Front fan. Amiga (pictured) ($59.95), IBM ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #15.

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404

F-16 COMBAT PILOT: Designed by England-based **Digital Integration**, *F16 CP* is **EA**'s newest entry in the crowded but hot category of air combat simulators. The game's strength is its well designed head-to-head capability (via modem or direct connect). When not flying against your friends, you attempt to become Squadron Commander as you fly five missions against computer opponents. IBM and Atari ST $49.95. Circle Reader Service #16.

KEEF THE THIEF: The player takes the part of an apprentice thief in this humorous role playing adventure. First-person graphics, more than 200 monsters, 25 dungeon levels, three cities to loot, over 25 magic spells, real-time combat, and the option to choose Fewer or Easier monsters. Apple IIGS ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #17.

POWERDROME: This in an interesting race game in which players fly a space ship/race car in a futuristic Grand Prix of sorts. Two players can hook up their machines and race head to head, or a solo pilot can compete against three computer opponents. There are six 3-dimensional tracks to race on, and several classes of racers to fly. Track and race conditions change, so players must alter their racer configurations for optimal racing results. Amiga (pictured) ($39.95) & ST. Circle Reader Service #18.

Infocom
P.O. Box 3047
Menlo Park, CA 94025

MINES OF TITAN: This new role-playing game from **Westwood Associates** (*Battletech*) takes place on the icy surface of Saturn's moon, Titan. Though it is basically a remake of EA's *Mars Saga*, it is on the IBM for the first time. Players must find out why all contact with the mining colony of Proscenium has mysteriously been lost. Top-down tacti-

(Continued on page 70)

(Continued from page 68)

cal combat, auto-mapping, skill improvement, and auto-combat options nicely round out this space adventure. IBM ($44.95). Circle Reader Service #19.

Konami
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

LIFE FORCE: The Nintendo game comes to the personal computer as the player fights his way through six different terror zones, loaded with the obligatory monsters on his way to conquer Zelos, the all-engulfing, planet-eating alien. Capturing pods gives a ship extra firepower in this joystick driven action game. C-64. Circle Reader Service #20.

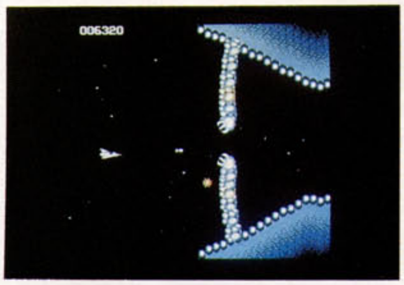
Lucasfilm Games
P.O. Box 2009
San Rafael, CA 94912

THEIR FINEST HOUR: THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN: *BOB* is the sequel to the award winning Battlehawks 1982 (CGW Action Game of the Year 1989). This time **Lucasfilm** takes us back to the epic struggle for mastery of England. The innovative camera replay feature of *Battlehawks* has been improved with VCR like controls and more camera angles (including one in the bombs themselves!) *BOB* adds landing fields, level bombing missions, additional gunner positions, and more. IBM $59.95. Circle Reader Service #21.

PIPE DREAM: This is a spatial strategy game that'll keep you on your toes. As a Plumber-in-Chief for a chemical company, you've got stay one step ahead of the flowing 'flooz' as you try to build the longest possible pipe system. The pipe segments appear at random and you've got to use quick thinking and forward planning in laying the pipe. As the rounds progress, you'll have to deal with obstacles, one way pipes, and faster flowing flooz. One or two players. IBM (pictured), Mac, Amiga & ST ($39.95), C-64 ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #22.

Lyric Software
6 Beach Plum Dr.
Northport, NY 11768

WORLDS AT WAR: One or two players contest this strategic wargame that is based on naval and amphibious combat, on a galactic scale. The game can be played at varying difficulty levels, with different style boards, (naval or galactic) and with options that include hidden movement and night turns. Initial production levels are also adjustable. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #23.



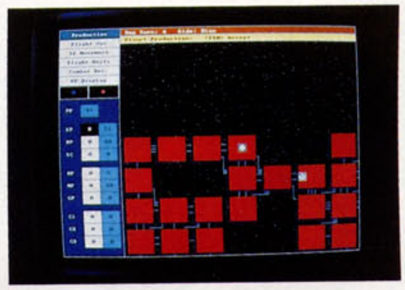
Life Force



Pipe Dream



Their Finest Hour



Worlds at War



Savage



Aussie Games

Medalist International
180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley, Maryland 21030

SAVAGE: The player takes the part of a powerful warrior searching for his kidnapped princess. To rescue her, he must fight through three different scenarios: fighting giant dragons, demon-like creatures, and a variety of different monsters, while looking for weapons and treasures. This is a fast moving, joystick-driven action game that has all the prerequisites of the genre. C-64 (pictured) ($29.95), IBM, Amiga, and St ($34.95). Circle Reader Service #24.

Mindscape
3444 Dundee Road
Northbrook, IL 60062

AUSSIE GAMES: The player participates in a six-pack of sporting events from the land down under. Belly whacking, beer-bottle shooting, marlin fishing, boomerang tossing, dry-river boat racing, and beach football will work up a player's thirst in this joystick driven action game. C-64 ($29.95). Circle Reader Service #25.

FIENDISH FREDDY'S BIG TOP O'FUN: Save the circus! If your traveling band of freaks and dare-devils doesn't come up with $10,000 by the end of tonight's performance, you're through. The six circus events (knife toss, trapeze act, tight-rope walking, human cannonball, juggling and high diving) are difficult enough without Fiendish Freddy (circus imp and employee of your debtor) trying to trip you up and spoil your show. The events are a challenge to master and the wonderful animated sequences and

(Continued on page 73)



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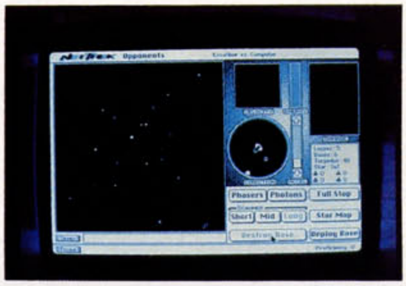
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(Continued from page 70)



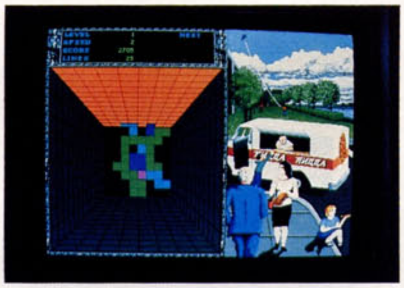
Fiendish Freddy



Net Trek



Shadow of the Beast



Welltris



Targhan



Roboman

gut-splitting antics will keep ya' rolling. Amiga (pictured) & ST ($49.95), IBM ($44.95). Circle Reader Service #26.

Premier Technology
650 Fifth Street #512
San Francisco, CA 94107

NET TREK: This intriguing multiplayer game allows several trekkies to have a friendly exchange of phaser blasts on an Apple Talk network. It's every captain for himself as each commands one of three types of starships using a very simple thrust-brake-fire command interface. The main objective is to be the first to deploy starbases in all nine galaxies in the game, though a secondary goal might be to vaporize the cocky captain on terminal #4. The game can also be played solo, though the computer opponent doesn't appreciate your nasty ship-to-ship messages as much as a human opponent might. Mac ($59.95). Circle Reader Service #27.

Psygnosis
P.O. Box 483
Addison, Illinois 60101

SHADOW OF THE BEAST: This product is just what we've come to expect from Psygnosis: tough action gaming with beautiful graphics and sound. In this game, the player is on a quest for revenge against The Beast that captured him as a youth and turned him into his servant. Psygnosis really pushes the Amiga to the limit in this one with 350 screens of action, 132 monsters, 900k of music and 2Mb of graphics. The multi-layered 3-D scrolling effect is nothing short of amazing. Amiga ($49.95). Circle Reader Service #28.

Simulations Canada
P.O. Box 452
Bridgewater, Nova Scotia
Canada B4V 2X6

KRIEGSMARINE: Part of the grand tactical simulation series from **Sim Can** that includes *Long Lance* and *In Harm's Way*, this Atlantic Ocean entry covers tactical naval combat in the Atlantic from 1939 to 1944. Nine scenarios are provided along with a build-your-own system. IBM, Amiga, Apple II and ST. ($60.00). Circle Reader Service #29.

Spectrum Holobyte
2061 Challenger Drive
Alameda, CA 94501

WELLTRIS: The Soviets are at it again, trying to corrupt our minds with another extremely addictive spatial strategy game. In this sequel to *Tetris*, players must maneuver block formations as they fall down the walls of a well, and try to form vertical and horizontal lines of blocks on the bottom. As in *Tetris*, the speed and levels of difficulty can be altered to the player's gaming level, and each level is accompanied by a scene from Soviet culture. IBM ($34.95). Circle Reader Service #30.

Star Games
708 W. Buffalo Ave.
Suite 200
Tampa, Fl 33603

TARGHAN: Travel mystical lands with sword in hand, journeying toward the castle of the Evil One to uncover his secret. Along your jaunt to the evil guy's place, you'll meet gorgeous nymphs, minotaurs, and dragons. Beautiful graphics and typical hack and slash action mark this adventure-action import. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #31.

XOR
7607 Bush Lake Road
Minneapolis, Minn. 55435

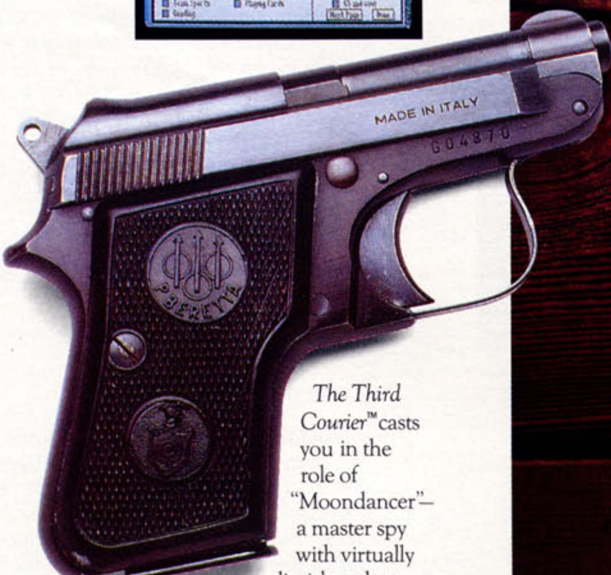
ROBOMAN: In this action game, players maneuver Roboman around the screen, using elevators and springboards, popping balloons for points and searching for the key to the next level. Quite frankly, this game looks like something that could have been published in the early 80's. IBM ($39.95). Circle Reader Service #32.

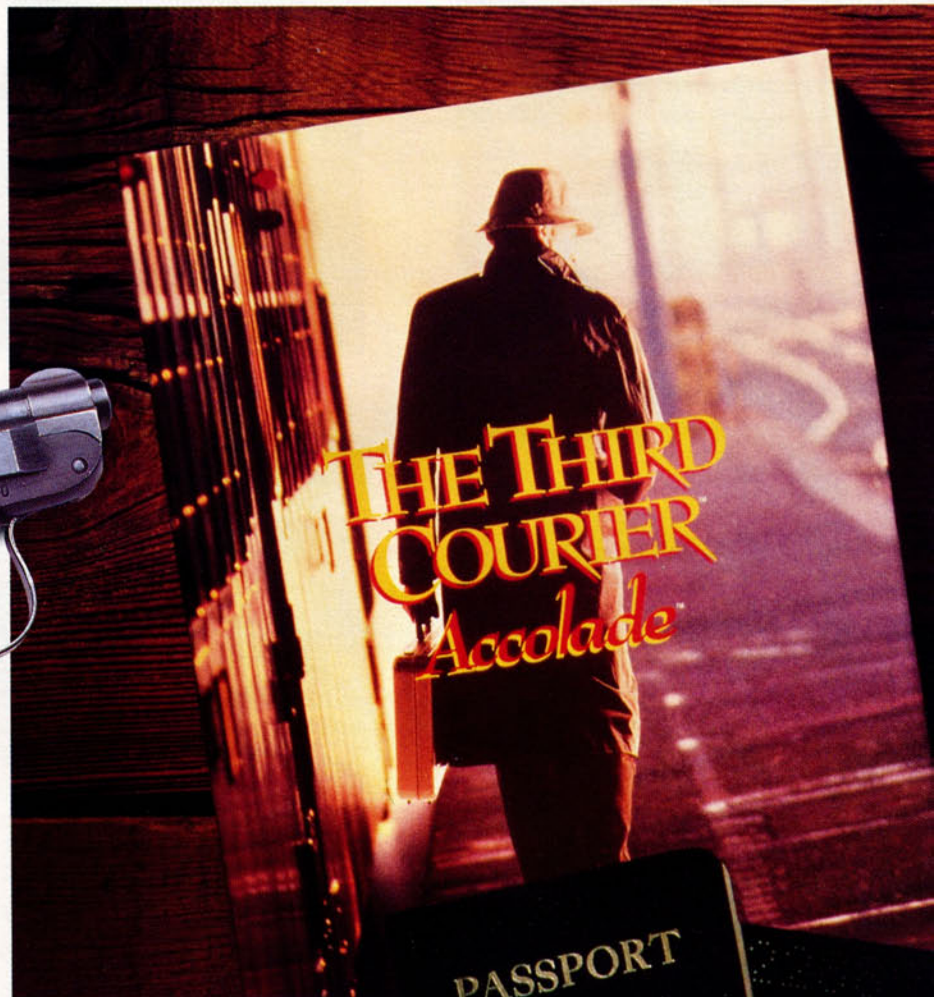
Blood, Swe

Enter the present. Tense.

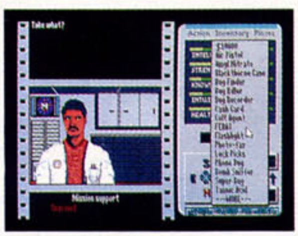
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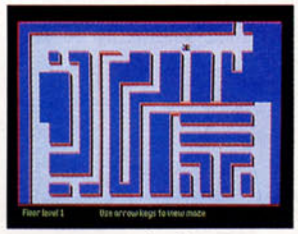




Actual game screens from IBM PC EGA version of the game. Other versions may vary.

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attempting to solve the mysteries of this enormous "fortress of fright." Now you, joined by an expert team of 16 polter-professionals, are destined to battle the 100 monsters that dwell inside the multi-level mansion.

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MINES OF TITAN
FROM THE CREATORS OF BATTLETECH
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PARAMOUNT MINING, INC.
PRIMUS, TITAN

(Continued from page 59)

MechWarrior

In *MechWarrior*, though, there are some nice refinements. All the 'Mechs in the simulation have an AWS (Automatic Weapon System). This beauty opens up an incredibly devastating tactic, *Peterson's Prodigious Punch-out* (used by boardgame guru and author of the documentation, Steve Peterson). To use this tactic, one simply leaves every potential weapon hooked to the AWS; lines up the crosshairs on one of the enemy 'Mech's legs; and hits the "Tab" key. This fires every weapon at the player's disposal in sequence, faster than the player himself possibly could, until that point at which the heat build-up shuts down the reactor long enough for it to cool down.

Another advantage of the AWS is to link all the weapons except the short range missiles and machine guns to it. Then, one can use the relatively inexpensive lasers to range in on the enemy as he closes range. In this way, one doesn't expend ammunition which has both a limited range and must be replenished at a cost to the player until it is certain to have some impact on the battle.

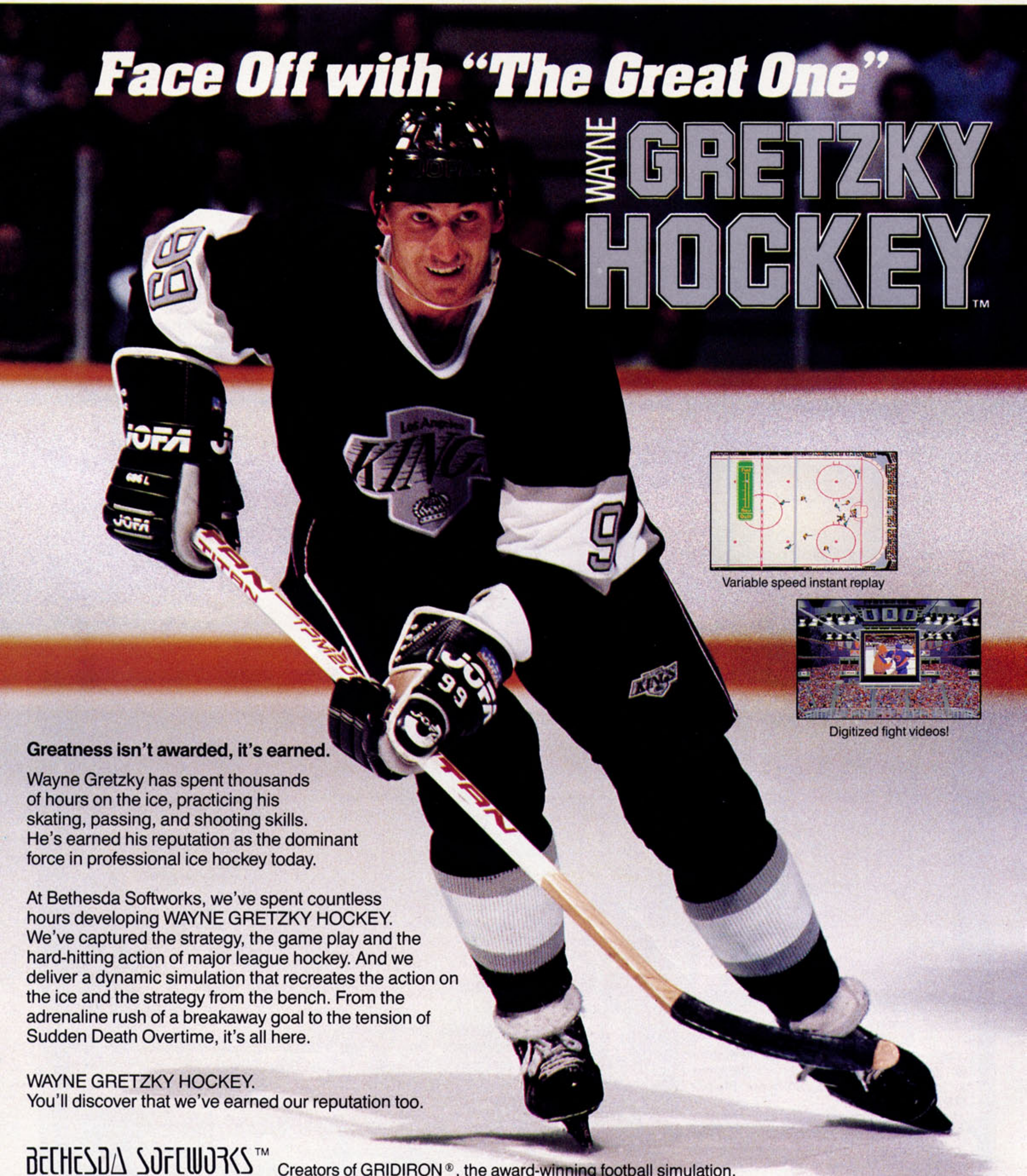
Irritation shot through the field commander's voice. "Harkness bought it when he marched his Marauder into a Liao militia ambush. They had inferno rockets and roasted him alive."
Alanna felt as if an icy dagger had been thrust into her stomach. What a way to die! Inferno rockets exploded just before they hit their targets, covering a 'Mech or building with a jellied fuel that burned like hell itself. The heat buildup was enough to render a 'Mech inoperable. Alanna shot a glance at her own heat monitors and felt a cold trickle of sweat run down her spine.

—Michael A. Stackpole, Warrior: Coupe.

Some hardcore *Battletech* aficionados will feel like *MechWarrior* is not complete enough. For example, they will point out that there are no inferno rockets in the game. Further, they will be disappointed that some 'Mechs like: *Valkyrie, Centurions, Spiders, Hunchbacks, Wolfhounds, Ostsols,* and *Crusaders* are not included (However, the design team plans to develop a sequel with more 'Mechs should this product prove successful). They will undoubtedly lament the inability to customize one's 'Mechs within

(Continued on page 79)

Face Off with "The Great One"



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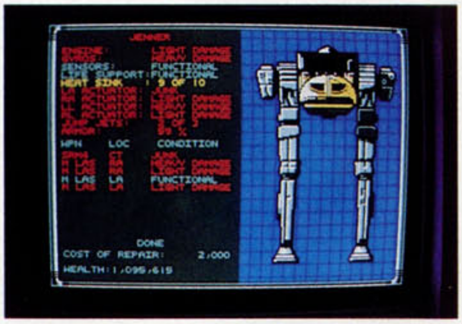
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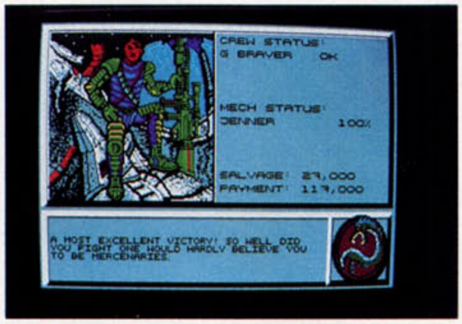
MechWarrior

the bounds of the simulation. Yet, they will be missing the point.

MechWarrior is so easy-to-use, fast-to-play, and absolutely mesmerizing in its presentation that it forces the player to suspend his/her disbelief like no previous product. I literally shuddered when the cockpit view shook from enemy attacks. I personified those enemy 'Mechs and shouted derisive unprofessional epithets at them as we engaged in battle. I hung my head in shame when the "Defeat" screens admonished me and I lifted my hands "Rocky"-style when the "Victory" screens offered their glorious accolades. In short, I found myself booting the game and fighting through a mission during every spare moment. I've played it for minutes and I've played it for hours. It wears extremely well.



A "Jenner" is repaired after a disastrous battle



A victory screen from an early scenario

Whether you are already a fan of the *Battletech* universe or you are simply looking for the next "hot" simulation, you should consider *MechWarrior*. If you're not a fan, *MechWarrior* will make you one. If you already are a fan of *Battletech*, it will rejuvenate your enthusiasm for a fascinating science fiction universe. **CGW**

Quotations from The Warrior Trilogy used by permission of FASACorporation.


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(Continued from page 34)

Midway

rule, general wind patterns in the Pacific basin favor the Japanese player by allowing his carriers to continue to steam toward their objective while launching aircraft, whereas American carriers must turn away from the advancing Japanese fleet to come into the wind envelope for flight operations. Indeed, every aspect of the game seems weighted in favor of the Japanese, despite the historical outcome. It is possible to recreate history, but it requires a lot of patience and no small measure of good old luck.

Overall, **General Quarters Software** has succeeded in providing war gamers an inexpensive way to strive for a miracle. *Midway* is a fine achievement for the fledging firm, offering challenging (if not balanced) game play, smooth operation, adequate graphics, and a very strong computer opponent. It is certainly worth the purchase price.

CGW

(Continued from page 20)

Starflight 2

hack n' slash gaming. It is a great sequel to a great game.

Game Hints

The following information was purchased from a Humna Humnan ambassador by Capt. Johnson of the Interstel Corporate Police [Known on Earth as Greg Johnson, lead designer of the *Starflight* series.]. Rumor has it, the captain paid dearly for these precious tidbits; including a few hundred meters of Shyneum, several Running Fungi, and a crewmember to be named later. (**Note: Commanders who wish to eschew hints should skip this section.**).

Getting off to a good start:

- Class 1 armaments are useless and will only get you into trouble. The money tied up in them would be better used as trading capital. Sell them.
- It doesn't hurt to swallow that pride and be OBSEQUIOUS with some sentients, especially the Tandelou.
- Recommending planets is a great way for the more adventuresome captains to gain some working cash. Check out the class M system next to starport and the class M system at the Top of the Wee Dipper.
- According to the chatter on the Humna Humna com-lines, hefty profits can be earned by trading Tandelouvian Happy Juice to the Teeelveee (downspin edge of the cloud). While there, you can lasso a few eight-legged rhino and sell them for some petty cash.
- A good set of thrusters can keep you out of trouble. Work on obtaining class 5 engines first. If you keep your nose out of trouble, you really shouldn't need armor and weaponry until later.

Staying alive with mature crews:

- A handy little gadget is the Encounter Scan, produced by the Humna Humna in a back-water star system somewhere in the area of 237,88. You might want to bring a little LiveLong for PR purposes.
- Jump pods can save travel time and fuel. They're a bit risky unless you know the trick. Their accuracy is related to the level of gravity in the target area. Select your destination as close as possible to as many stars as possible. The middle of a cluster is best, but not directly on top of a star.

• The Humna Humna have the most useful info (as this list shows). Visit them in their sector in the Downspin, Coreward corner. Obliging their request will make them friendlier, but refusing will not upset them.

• Avoid travel in the Cloud, it's rather nasty in there.

• When you enter an encounter with an alien vessel, the first thing you should ALWAYS do is maneuver away from them until you are at a safe distance. This will give you much more reaction time if they decide they don't like the color of your starship.

• If you acquire a G'nunk crew member, be "Hostile" every now and again in communications to keep her happy and don't ever be Obsequious.

CGW

Conversions Received

Bad Dudes (Data East) Amiga, Apple
Beyond Dark Castle (Activision) C-64
Boot Camp (Konami) IBM
Carrier Command (Microplay) IBM
Don't Go Alone (Accolade) IBM
Downhill Challenge (Broderbund) Amiga
Dr. Doom's Revenge (Paragon) Amiga
Empire (Interstel) C-64
Grand Prix Circuit (Accolade) Mac
Fast Break (Accolade) Apple IIGS
Hillsfar (SSI) Amiga, ST
Indiana Jones & the Last Crusade Action Game (Lucasfilm) Amiga, IBM
Indiana Jones Graphic Adventure (Lucasfilm) Amiga
Jack Nicklaus 1989 Course Disk (Accolade) Amiga
Jetfighter (Broderbund) IBM
Keef the Thief (EA) Amiga
Maniac Mansion (Lucasfilm) ST, IBM
Monopoly (Virgin/Leisure) IBM
Obliterator (Psygnosis) IBM
Paperboy (Mindscape) Amiga, ST
Perils of Rosella (Sierra) Apple
Pirates (Microprose) ST
Qix (Taito) Apple
Renegade (Taito) Apple
Robocop (Data East) Amiga, IBM
Sargon 4 (Spinnaker) IBM
Shinobi (Sega) IBM
Space Quest III (Sierra) Amiga
Star Command (SSI) Amiga, ST
Starglider II (Microplay) IBM
Stellar Crusade (SSI) Amiga
Strike Zone (Melbourne) IBM
subLogic Scenery Disk Amiga
Super Hang-On (Data East) Amiga, ST
Tangled Tales (Origin) IBM
Three Stooges (Cinemaware) Apple IIGS
Thunderchopper (subLogic) IBM
Where in the USA is Carmen Sandiego (Broderbund) Amiga
Windwalker (Origin) IBM

(Continued from page 55)

DAVID WOLF SECRET AGENT

and the international locations, including the obligatory casino. **Dynamix** has imitated one of the most successful movie formulas of all time and, at first, they seem to have done it well. The first scene (preceding the hang-glider segment) is tightly written and crackles with wittier dialogue than we've seen in the last three Bond films. The actors are well-cast for their roles, and the sets are convincing. *David Wolf* comes off as a grade-A production. Unfortunately, the initial level of the dialogue doesn't last. What starts as genuine, refreshing wit ends up at a surprisingly low level (calling the villain "Mr. Fatso" as a half-pun on the name "Vasto," for instance). When the script tries to be funny, it usually is, but when it tries to play it straight, it ends up being funny anyway, in the way James Bond plots become increasingly comical in proportion to how serious they try to be. Here, however, the viewer isn't certain how to take the material. Is it a parody of James Bond (which is, by now, self-parodic), as a straight comic adventure (imitation Bond as opposed to parody), or as a serious thriller. It is hard to take the strictly formula plot seriously, but several of the scenes suggest that one is supposed to. I suspect that the screenwriters never quite decided which direction to take, and hoped to be able to do a little of each. This can't possibly work. You can't both parody a genre and, at the same time, place yourself firmly within that genre, because the resulting self-parody looks embarrassingly unwitting. Certainly, you can't do this *and* expect to be taken seriously. *Airplane!* couldn't ask us to take seriously its disaster plot and *Young Frankenstein* didn't try to make viewers cry over the monster's plight, but this is what the designers of *David Wolf* seem to be doing.

So, while the casting is first-rate, the performances are not. Rather, they are loaded with goofy, exaggerated gestures and expressions. All the actors seem to be stepping outside their roles, as though to say, "We know this is a formula movie, we're not fools." Or worse: "This isn't a movie, it's only a computer game."

Let's face it: Goldfinger can't know he's an exaggeration; Lt. Frank Drebin can't know he's a buffoon; and actors can't let on that they know their characters are anything less than real people. *David Wolf*'s actors are never submersed in their roles. It is clear that they don't take the story seriously, so how can we?

This is not to say that there is nothing to enjoy after the first scene. Wolf's briefing is well-written and juicy; the payoff to the freefall sequence (which is given away on the package) is nice; the launching of the stealth bomber is capped by a clever bit of action; and there's always Kelly's bondage scene, if you're into that. Besides, all of the scenes (I calculate about a half-hour of "footage," total) are fun to watch just for the sheer joy of seeing digitized images on your PC.

Alas, the sheer joy wears thin after a while, and neither the action nor the movie is strong enough to rescue *David Wolf*. What **Dynamix** has done with *David Wolf, Secret Agent* has probably taken the genre about as far as it can go. Unfortunately, the problem is that the genre makes for games that you won't want to play or watch twice. Despite this inherent limitation, *David Wolf* is unique and worth a look for only one reason: it is visually stunning and executed with flair.

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Dragon Wars

so much running one can do; eventually, fighting becomes necessary. The trick is to take on the weaker opponents, those you have a fair chance of defeating with bare hands. Soldiers and guards do *not* fall into this category! Born losers might be a better choice.

Combat is totally menu-driven. When a confrontation occurs, a picture of the closest foe is displayed on the left, and a main option menu comes up on the right. This is where you choose to Fight, Run, or Advance. Advancing moves the party forward ten feet. Running causes each party member to flee individually. This can be dangerous in close combat, as some monsters may be faster than some characters and hence, get in a shot or two as they run away. Fighting, of course, brings up a sub-menu of choices for each character, one at a time. Essentially, you can attack, dodge, block, cast a spell, use an item, run, or move forward or back in line. Additional sub-menus appear when "Attack" or "Cast a spell" is chosen. Casting a spell requires the most decisions, as you must choose the type of magic, the type of spell, and finally, the spell itself. While this is a lot to wade through, familiarity makes it go faster, especially since you only need to type in the first letter of each choice (plus return). Also, you will probably have a small selection of favorite spells to use in combat, thus casting can go very quickly indeed. When there is more than one group of opponents, you also have a choice as to which one you want a particular character to attack. Range (which is given) is extremely important here, both for spells and distance weapons such as bows. Different spells have different range limits, so keep the manual handy to make sure you aren't wasting magic on someone unreachable. The same holds true for distance weapons; i.e. a long bow can shoot farther than a regular bow. As you experiment with different ranged weapons, you will learn what the optimums are for each one.

Health is always important and, once all combat choices have been made, the menus are replaced by the names of the characters with bar graphs beneath them. The first bar, in red, represents hit points. Should this reach zero, the character is dead (and you can be dead a long time in this game). The second bar, in green, shows stun. If this goes down to zero, the character is alive but unconscious. He can be revived during combat with a healing spell or potion. Should none be available (or there's no time to use one), the character is restored fully (as far as stun goes) when combat is over. A character always takes stun damage when hit, and stun is always twice the physical injury. Thus a blow that causes three points of damage on the red bar will do six on the green bar. In many cases, a character will drop from stun damage instead of death. The third bar, in blue, appears only for mages, and measures how much magical energy remains for spell-casting. If this goes to zero, or close to it, that character is unable to cast spells. Magical energy does not regenerate automatically; you need a dragonstone or magic pool to restore it. Should the entire party become

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Dragon Wars

stunned, it is not the end. You are simply turned around and moved away from the combat square, just as though you had run. Physical damage remains, but the stun bars are renewed, and everyone (who didn't die in combat) is still alive. Of course, if everyone does die, you'll have to restore to your last save and try again.

In this game, death is even more necessary to avoid than in other games. There are no spells, no handy temples, no wandering priests to bring back the deceased. There is one, and only one, place where resurrection is possible. It is not easy to reach or find. Should someone die, my recommendation is to restore the game, because you need all the people you can get.

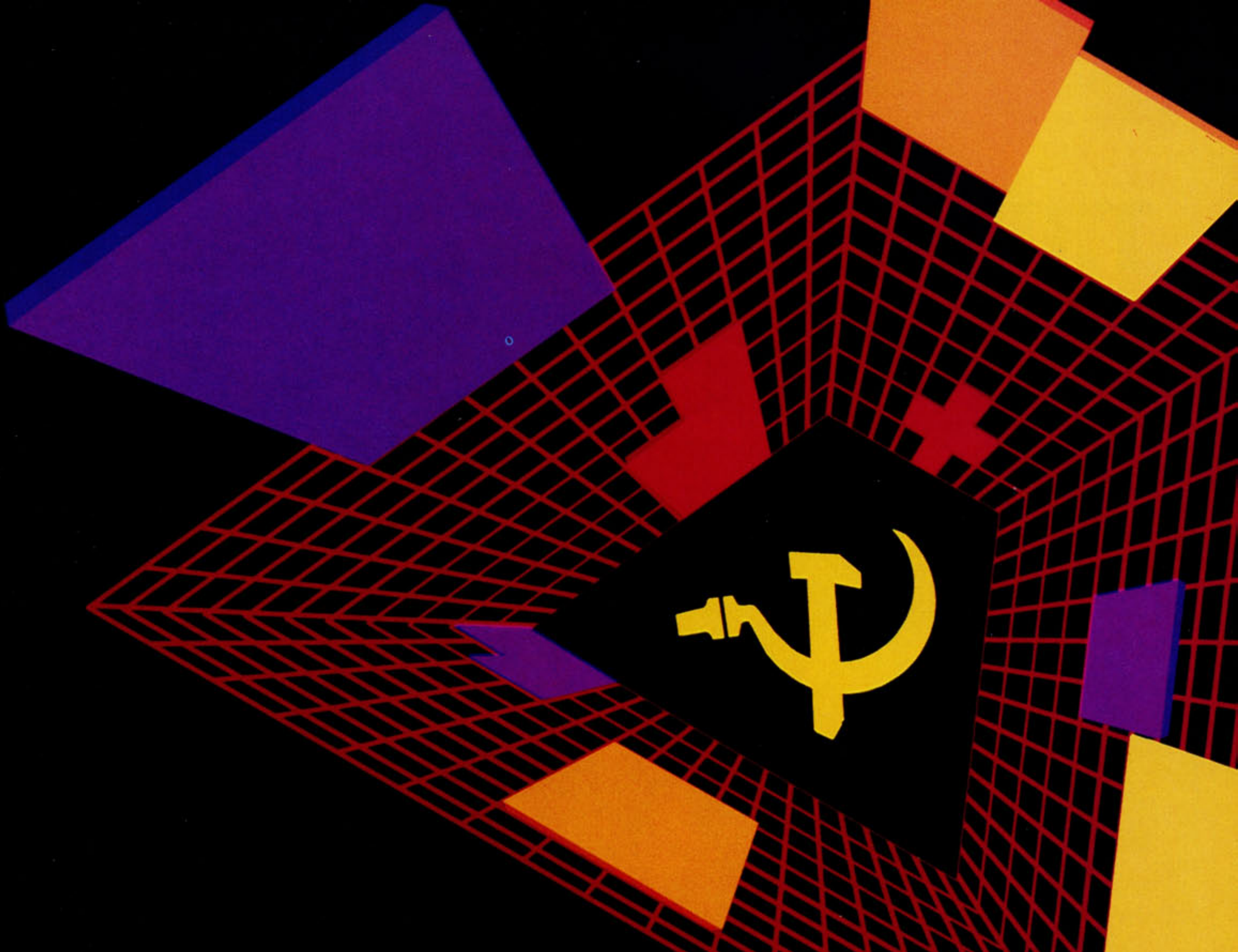
Magic, as you've probably guessed by now, is no longer a case of "nuke 'em till they glow". Those days are over. Combat spells are much more restrained. The majority of the group-effect spells do a maximum of 24-36 points of damage. There are a few spells which can be more potent, by virtue of the points put into them (Inferno comes to mind as an example), but don't expect to find anything of god-like power (even if you get it from a god).This is true of goodies in the game as well. There are many neat things out there, waiting for your hot little hands, but you won't be stumbling over swords (+50) or armor (+90), since there aren't any. Further, combat gives you experience points (and sometimes a little cash). Anything beyond that has to be found. No chests with mega-items will be presented after you slaughter the goblins . . . or anyone else for that matter. The good stuff is tucked away and you'll just have to ferret it out on your own.

Some of the Neat Things out there are NPC's you can add to the party. Up to three of them can be included in the group (giving you seven characters in all), and you would be wise to take in some extra help. They fight, cast spells, use items, etc., as you direct them to, so there is little difference between them and the regular party members. NPC's also go up in level, just as the characters do, thus they, too, improve over time. In general, the game works very well. Combat is properly balanced, and you will need a mix of muscle and magic in most encounters to prevail.

Treasure is *equally* balanced. All of it has been placed specifically with no random items in the game. This is a brilliant stroke, as it prevents the "Monty Haul" syndrome, while still providing everything the party needs to complete the game. The designers have been generous, but not outrageous.

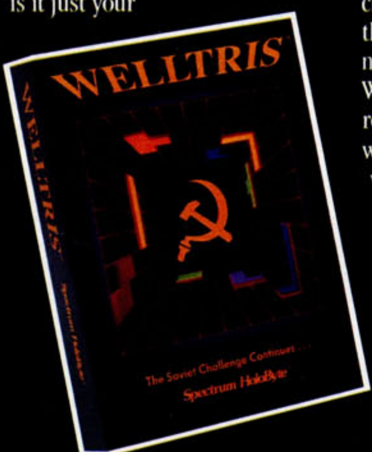
Also, there are many subplots in the game, though their overall effect is relatively minor. For example, if you manage to destroy the city of Phoebus, it will not materially affect your chances of success. On the other hand, you certainly won't

(Continued on page 93)



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APPLE II DISPLAY
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WHITESTONE MOVEMENT PHASE
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GRASSLAND(-) X,Y:25,18
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ROLAND
HITPOINTS 61
AC 6
MOVE VIEW AIM USE QUICK DONE
IBM DISPLAY

(Continued from page 90)

Dragon Wars

be able to do anything in Phoebus again, since it isn't there any more (ah well, this is why we have save games . . .). Still, these various subplots add a great deal to the game. There's nothing like being drafted into the enemy's army to make you sit up and take notice! Selling yourself into slavery (horrible thought!) as one way out of Purgatory leads to a simple but complete adventure of its own. It doesn't change anything, but you'll certainly have some nervous moments as you sneak around in chains trying to escape. Everything builds to the moment of your final confrontation with Namtar. Make no mistake, this is a *mean* one. Forget all those wimpy evil-doers who drop dead in the first round of combat. Namtar is one tough customer and you will remember this fight for a long, long time. It is probably the best end-game battle of any CRPG I've ever played. Decide *that* one for yourself when you get there. Those who hate mapping (and they are legion) will rejoice over the auto-map feature. It automatically records all places you have been (unexplored areas are black) and remembers them, as well. Outdoors, indoors, town, dungeon, wherever, the auto-map will faithfully record it for you, along with significant land features (trees, walls, doors, etc). Of course, it only shows your current area. If you're inside a city, for instance, the map is only of the city. If you're in the outdoors, the map is of the outdoors, although you will see the landmarks on it (the ones you've visited, that is).

The graphics (Apple double hi-res) are excellent. While the monster pictures are not fully animated, they do have movement (some of it quite subtle). Since combat is not in real-time, take a moment when an encounter begins to enjoy the pics (it will probably be the only chance you have to do so). When you're not fighting, the display shows your current location, with 3D view.

On the down side, the most important factor is the lack of conversation. While there are many very nice paragraphs in the manual to read, there is no real dialogue between the characters and people they meet (as one would have in an *Ultima* or *Magic Candle*). More interaction is needed in this area. There are some minor annoyances: you don't know anything about an NPC until you've taken him into the party; having items examined at a store reveals nothing about their special powers (if any); if a bow is unequipped, its arrows or bolts are also unequipped; requiring two rounds in combat to re-equip them both.

Fortunately, none of this is very detrimental to playing the game. In spite of a few rough edges, *Dragon Wars* leaves the "Bard" series in the dust. Tighter design, attention to detail, balanced combat, and a carefully constructed plotline all combine to produce a CRPG well worth playing.

Bottom line: Highly recommended, especially for those tired of hack and slash epics.

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(Continued from page 46)

Murder Club

has talked to the right people, brought in the correct people for questioning, and so forth.

Such cannot be what the programmers intended; indeed, it is very apparent from playing the game that they tried to create a tight world, a single-minded investigator, lots of intrigue, and even double-plotting. All of that is there. It is present in the game. Unfortunately, however, playing *Murder Club* eventually becomes sort of like playing *Ultima III* a second time. One takes the necessary steps and tries to pretend that he doesn't already know the secrets to the game.

"Tell 'em about da pictures, Dennis!"

Fortunately, *Murder Club* augments its deterministic plot with some interesting graphics. Each location has its own scene, but one should be aware that the scene is more of a picture than an interactive environment. Nothing in the picture can be manipulated because, of course, the game is really a text mystery with menus.

Curiously enough—since the pictures are included at all—almost all of the backgrounds in the scenes are splashed one color: the orange/yellow of "The Hungry Fisherman", for example, or the gray of Dr. Beckert's clinic. If the designers of *Murder Club* set out to beautify a menu-driven text mystery with graphics and decided to fill three disks in the process, shouldn't they have finished the job and added multiple colors to the scenes?

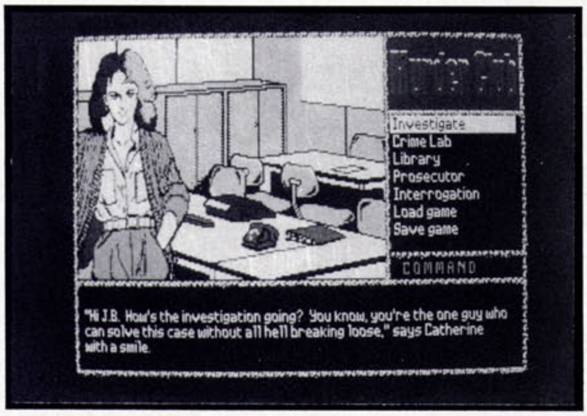
"Tell 'em da good part, Dennis!"

On the plus side: the mystery is tight, the characters are all plausible, the conversations seem realistic, and the personalities of the characters seem individual. The plot is well-written and offers some depth. The manual is both helpful and clever, as well.

Possibly intended for beginners and players who don't have the patience to finish traditional adventure games, *Murder Club* is nonetheless not recommended for young minds. Though no sex is involved, many of the emotions the characters reveal may be too destructive and intense for the less mature mindset.

Da Goods On Da Game

Da goods on dis game iz dat, if youse can fuhgit dat dis iz nuttin' but a compudah game, which da game in no ways lets youse fugit, den youse might finds its ta be sum kind o' complex moidah mystery. **CGW**




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"Mean 18" is a trademark of Accolade, Inc.

(Continued from page 40)

Scorpion's Mail

were a little bigger than a kid). Then again, maybe politeness is becoming a lost art . . .

Ultima III:

This game is definitely enjoying a revival, going by the increase in mail on it. One problem that seems universal (so to speak) is locating the Mark of the Snake. This is not easy, as there is only one dungeon where the mark may be obtained, and it's not on the main continent. Also, there are several rods at the bottom, which give other marks and may fool people into thinking the snake mark isn't there. So, make sure you tour the dungeon well and try all the rods on the bottom level.

Ultima V:

Some people have asked if you need to have all characters at level eight to finish the game. No, it isn't necessary, although it certainly doesn't hurt (grin). However, if you've done everything else in the game, there's no need to put off the big rescue just because the party members are not at maximum level. Also, in the room below the sandtraps in the final dungeon, you must kill off all the monsters before you can make the bridge appear. Then, of course (hehe), you have to find the trigger for it. Deft hurling of magic axes should do the job.

Neuromancer:

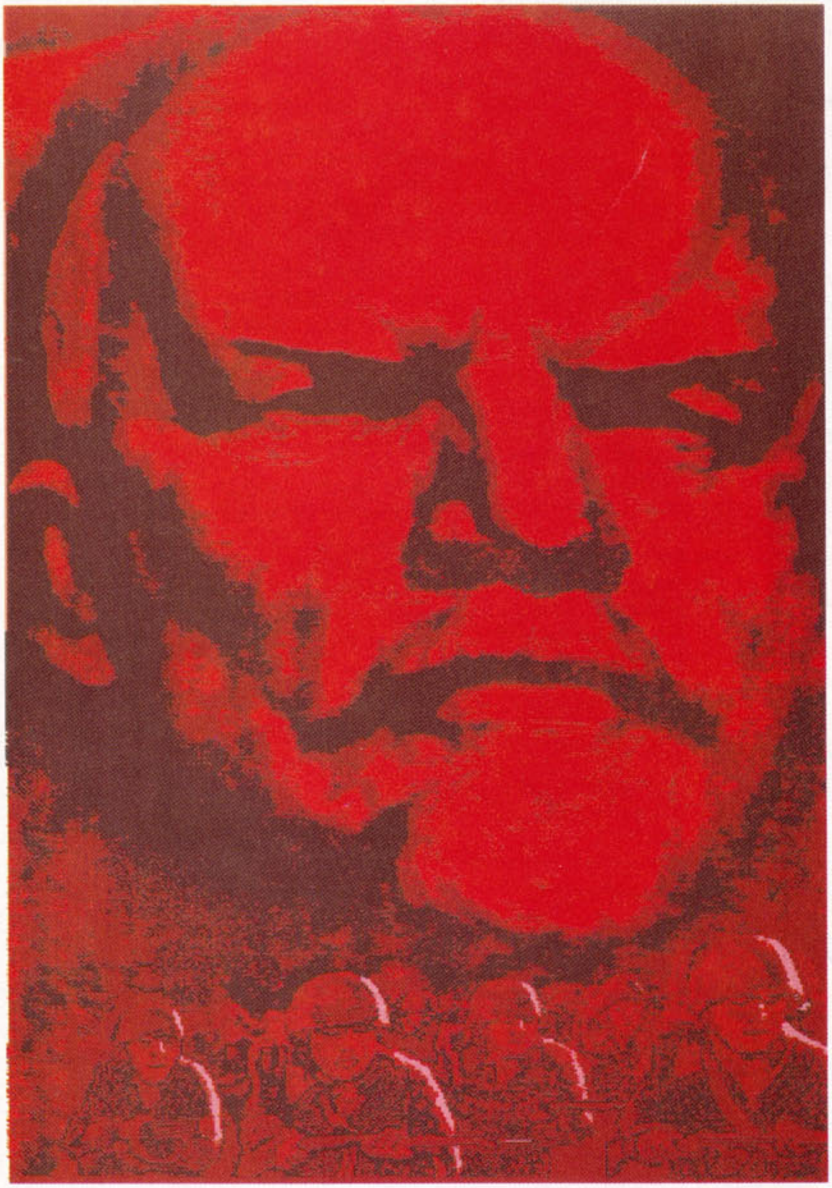
Greystoke is something to be left until late in the game. He (it?) is extremely powerful and you need some heavy-duty stuff to defeat him. So, if you find yourself a wreck after going up against him, just back off and leave him be for awhile. Eventually, you'll have what you need to do the job.

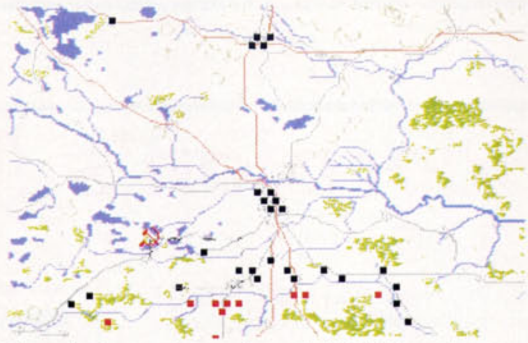
That's about it for this dip into the mailbag. Fred and I wish you all a very happy holiday season, and may Santa Gru . . . err . . . Claus, bring you all the games you want (all the good ones, anyway! grin). In the meantime, if you need help with an adventure game, you can reach me in the following ways:

On Delphi: Stop by the GameSIG (under the Groups and Clubs menu). On GEnie: Visit the Games RoundTable (type: Scorpia to reach the Games RT). By US Mail (and please remember to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you live in the United States!): Scorpia, PO Box 338, Gracie Station, New York, NY 10028.

Until next time, happy adventuring!

CGW





Historical map drawn from 1:100,000 scale maps captured from the Red Army by the Wehrmacht and captured from the Wehrmacht by the Allies.



Magnified scrolling view shows even more detail, including unit ID, unit type, damage, movement expended, and transportation category.

WHITE DEATH

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- Morale
- Headquarters
- Tank Fright
- Commandos
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- Sound Effects
- Unit Identification
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- Supply
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- Support
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- Garrisons
- Rail Movement

You are on the Russian Front, winter 1942 - 1943. As the German Sixth Army slowly starves in the devastated city of Stalingrad, the Soviets launch a second onslaught . The mission: Encircle and destroy the German garrison entrenched at the vital rail junction of Velikiyi Luki. The stage is set for one of the most bitterly fought battles on the Eastern Front.

Historical accuracy, crucial detail, realistic sound effects and advanced personal computer technology combine to make White Death a highly challenging and exciting wargame.

White Death is adapted from the GDW game of the same name which won, in the year it was released, the Game Designer's Guild Award and F&M's Best Operational Game Award.

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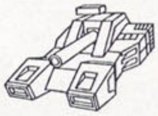
Origin/CGW Omega Tournament Report

AUSTIN (CGW) -- The Origin/CGW OMEGA Tournament continues with 48 entrants in the October Monthly Tournament. LASSWAN, designed by Stuart Eastman of Aurora, Colorado took top honors. LASSWAN (clever name since he *was* the 'last one' on the battlefield) defeated a strong field of competitors by exhibiting aggressiveness with a capital 'A'. However he knew when to clear out. He slugged it out until sustaining a certain level of damage. He then disengaged and went off to do repairs, and returned to create more mayhem. Other October finalists were: from Westminster, Maryland, Donald Cole's PHANTOM (2nd place: used tactical retreats to his advantage); from Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, Julio Trujillo's MOODYB2 (3rd place: liked clear field of fires; took out a lot of obstacles); from Culver City, California, Chris Bruck's VULTURE (4th place: fights until he is hurt, and then retreats); Trujillo's MOODYB1 (5th place: like his brother, he hates obstacles); and Eastman's HUNTER (very persistent, he moves with purpose). The designers of each of these cybertanks have earned the right to participate in the Championship Round to be reported in the April issue of *Computer Gaming World*.

Comments from OSI Officials

We were very pleased that cybertank engineers participating in the October tournament created much more aggressive tanks this month. Overall, the cybertanks seemed to use their equipment better, and there was a definite increase in the intelligence of the tanks. More intelligent use of terrain will probably be important for future competition.

The deadline for submissions to the December monthly tournament is 9AM December 28, 1989.



HARPOON

Somewhere in the desolate and freezing wastes of the North Atlantic, between Iceland and the Kola Peninsula, a Soviet battle fleet is lurking, ready to pounce on its prey.

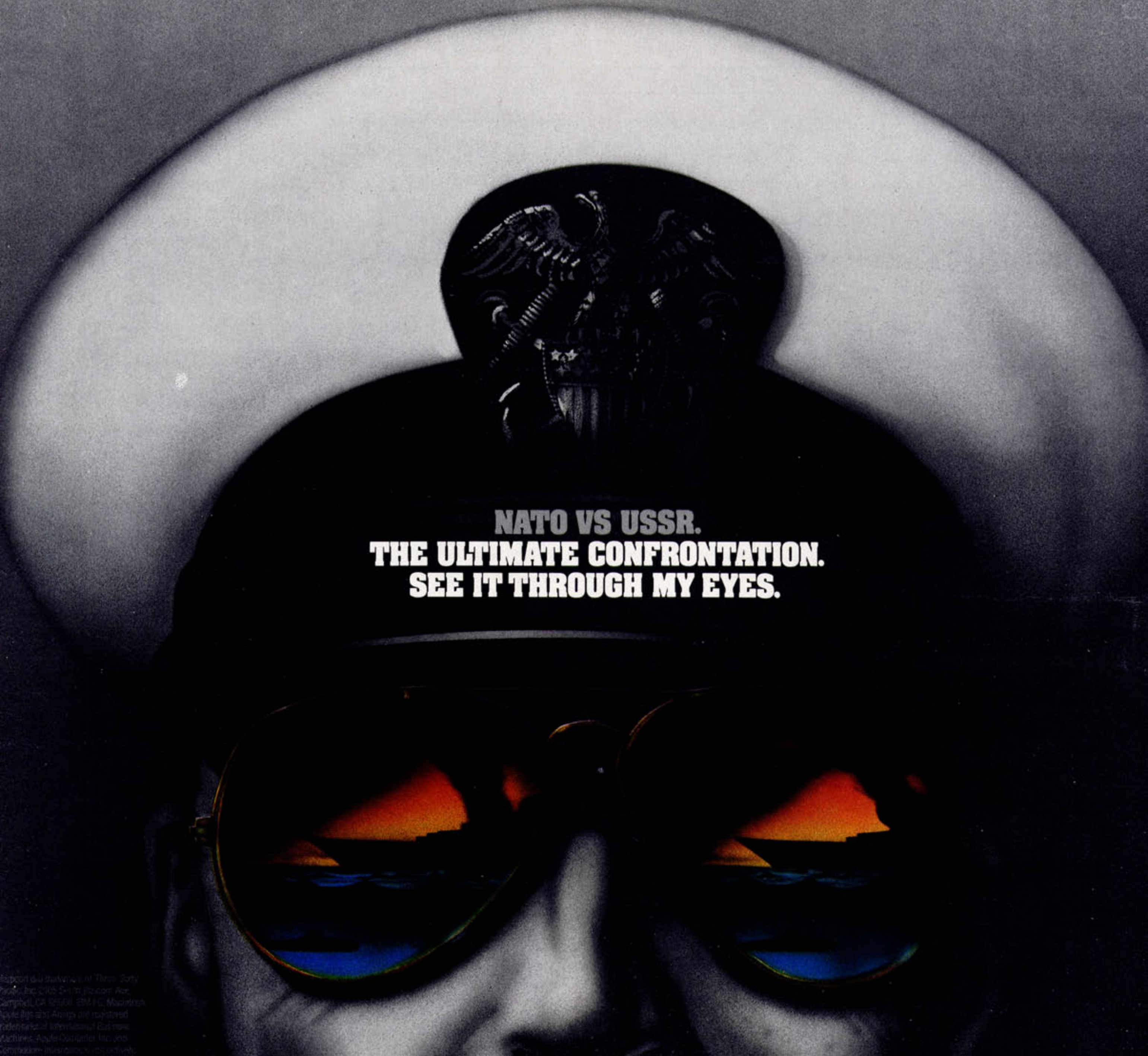
As NATO Task Force Commander you must deploy your fleet of submarines, ships, and aircraft to locate, engage and defeat the Kremlin's finest.

Produced by Larry Bond, noted co-author of "Red Storm Rising" and Naval Analyst, Harpoon portrays the superpower's final confrontation. Now it's up to you.

With graphics that make everything else look like finger painting, and an arsenal of weaponry that comes up to your armpits, Harpoon's non-stop action, relentless intensity and chilling responsibility will leave you gasping. It's more than a mere game—it's a current event!

Available now for PC/compatibles. Coming for Macintosh, Apple IIGS and Amiga. Contact your software retailer or Three-Sixty, 408/879-9144.

THREE-SIXTY



(Continued from page 12)

Over There

Of Gods & Gremlins



and awe-inspiring clad in a pair of red water-wings?"

The luckless Poseidon is selected, by Zeus, as the first of the gods to prove their worth. The task being to steal Hades' helmet of invisibility from the throne room of the underworld palace. Packed with humor and a selection of quality graphics, *Myth* might prove to be a fitting farewell.

The above mentioned "Official Secrets" club was set up by Tony Rainbird, the man who founded **Rainbird Software** (now under the control of **Microprose**), Tony Rainbird. Upon joining the club (£30.00 in the US) you receive *Myth* and *Gnome Ranger* (from **Level 9**) or a surprise alternative. Also included is a bi-monthly magazine and access (for a nominal fee) to a large mail-order facility which is reasonably priced. The address is: Official Secrets, PO Box 847, Harlow, England, CM21 9PH. Telephone 01144 279 600204.

Bomber (Amiga, ST, PC, C64 - pre-Christmas launch) is causing a stir over here. Developed by **Vektor Grafix** for **Activision**, *Bomber* is a flight simulation which places the emphases on the action rather than the simulation. Set in the American mid-west, you must fly a tactical ground attack aircraft in an effort to win the coveted Curtis E. Le May Trophy. With a choice of six aircraft (including the Tornado, SAAB Viggen and MiG 27), *Bomber* is resplendent in solid 3-D graphics which, says **Vektor**, includes routines to cut the corners out of circles usually found in other, angular, 3-D games. Features include a detailed landscape, in-flight refueling from a KC-10 and DIY missions.

Quest For The Time Bird (*QTB*—ST, Amiga & PC —available now) comes from the French software house **Infogrames**. Your quest is to stop the rogue god Ramor from escaping his prison—a conch (no, I don't know why either) and wreaking general havoc. You control up to four characters in this graphic adventure. Controlled, principally, via point-and-click actions and menus, *QTB* includes quality graphics and atmospheric sound effects.

European Space Shuttle, by France's **Cocktel Vision**, has similarities to *Space M+A+X* in that you must, after choosing a mission and organizing a flight plan, launch your Space Shuttle (which looks very similar to the European Hermes project), set up an orbit and build a space station. Apparently, re-entry and landing procedures are also included.

Finally, a few snippets. **Argonaut Software** and **Ocean Software** are both developing solid 3-D flight simulators called *Aggressor* and *F-29*, respectively. **Empire** has produced a 3-D RPG where you walk amongst the characters, called *Let Sleeping Gods Lie*. Finally, German-based **Dragonware** has released a text/graphic adventure with high quality sound effects called *Ooze*. Phew!!! See you next month!

CGW

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Magic Candle	34
Manhunter SF	32
Mean Streets	38
Might & Magic II	33
Mines of Titan	31
Neuromancer	31
Police Quest II	33
Pirates	30
Pool of Radiance	34
Omnicron Conspiracy	33
Shogun	33
Sword of Aragon	34
Shadowgate	30
The Third Courier	33
The Manhole	33
Ultima IV-V	38
Ultima Trilogy	38
Zork Zero	39
AMIGA	
Arthur: Quest	33
Beyond Dark Castle	24
Dr. Doom's Revenge	28
Dungeon Master	27
I. Jones: Action Game	28
Last Inca	28
Powerdrome	28
Shadow of Beast	33
Times of Lore	28
Ultima III-IV	38

NEWEST GAMES OTHER FORMATS

Battle Chess (GS)	33
Battletech (A,ST)	33
Curse Azure Bonds (A)	34
Dragon Wars (A)	33
Hillsfar (ST)	34
King's Bounty (A)	Call
Knights Legend (A,C)	Call
Life & Death (GS,I)	34
Might/Magic II (Mac)	Call
Mines of Titan (A)	Call
MSFL Football (Mac)	33
Neuromancer (GS)	32
Omega (A,ST,C)	33
Pool Radiance (Mac)	34
Populus (ST)	34
Space Rogue (A)	33
Ultima Trilogy (A,C)	38
Windwalker (A,C)	28

SIMULATION

IBM	Price
A-10 Tank Killer	33
Battlehawks '42	34
Carrier Command	31
Chessmaster 2100	34
F-15 Strike Eagle II	36
F-19 Stealth Fighter	44
Falcon AT	39
F-16 Combat Pilot	34
Gunship	36
M-1 Tank Platoon	43
Omega	33
Red Storm Rising	35
Rommel: N Africa	31
Sargon IV	28
Sim City	33
Weltris	25
AMIGA	
Battlehawks '42	34
Battletech	33
Falcon	33
Falcon Mission Disk	18
Gunship	34
Omega	33
Red Lightning	41
Populus	34

SCIENCE FICTION

IBM	
Starflight	34
Space Quest III	37
Space Quest I-II	33
Space Rogue	33
Starfleet II	41
Starglider II	30
The Colony	33
AMIGA	
Star Command	34
Space Quest III	38
The Kristal	33
Targahan	28

SPORTS

IBM	
Ferrari Formula I	28
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MSFL Football	33
Muscle Cars	16
NFL Challenge	60
The Cycles	28
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AMIGA	
3-D Pool	24
Fast Break	30
Gretzky Hockey	33
Lombard Rally	28
Omniplay Basketball	33

SIERRA



Leisure Suit Larry 3 (I) 38



Conquest Camelot (I) 38



Hero's Quest (I) 38

NEW OR SOON TO BE RELEASED

IBM	Price
Battles Napoleon	Call
Code Name: Ice Man	38
Colonel's Bequest	38
Conspir: Deadlock	33
Don't Go Alone	28
Dragons of Flame	Call
Dragon Force	Call
Deathbringer	28
European Chall	16
Eye of the Storm	30
Harpoon	Call
Hardball II	28
Heatwave	28
Harley-Davidson	28
Knights of Legend	33
Mech Warrior	33
Nicklaus Course II	16
Panzer Battles	Call
Sorcerian	Call
Star Trek V	33
Sword of Samurai	36
Tank	38
Their Finest Hour	Call
TV Sports Football	34
Twilight 2000	Call
Typhoon of Steel	Call
Ultima VI (in 1990)	Call
X-Men	28
AMIGA	
Blue Angels	30
Chessmaster 2100	34
Dragon Force	Call
F-19 Stealth	Call
Gold of Americas	Call
Hardball II	30
Heat Wave	30
Hillsfar	Call
King's Quest IV	33
Leisure Suit Larry 2	33
Life & Death	Call
Manhunter SF	33
Might/Magic II	33
Neuromancer	31
Nuclear War	Call
Police Quest II	33
Pool of Radiance	Call
Stellar Crusade	Call
Swords of Twilight	Call
Their Finest Hour	Call
Ultima V	38

KOEI

Bandit Kings	Call
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Nobunaga's Ambition	40
Romance 3 Kingdoms	46

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DS-3000	550
Microtek	
MF11 Desk Top	965

SEASON'S SPECIALS

Bard's Tale I (I,A)	12
Demon Stalkers (I,C)	12
Hardball (I)	12
King of Chicago (I)	12
Modem Wars (I,C)	12
Shanghai (I)	12
Silent Service (I)	16
Strike Fleet (I,A,C)	12
Wasteland (I,A,C)	12
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Covering The Baseless

I heard a rumor from the Origins game convention that *CGW* and, at least, one other national game review magazine sells their covers, meaning that for a fee you will feature a particular game on the magazine cover and include a feature article on it. My questions are:

1) Is there any truth to this rumor?
2) Is this a common practice in the industry?
3) Doesn't this practice compromise the integrity of an independent review magazine like *CGW*?

Jeff Petraska
New Boston, MI

No, no and yes! This baseless accusation began at Origins with an off-hand comment by Chris Cummins, publisher of Fire & Movement *and* The Wargamer. *Chris stated matter of factly that F&M sold their cover. His philosophy is that it is the most valuable space in the magazine. Hence, it is worth the money. This was followed up with a comment that this was, allegedly, a common practice in the industry. In this way, gaming publications who oppose such a compromising mercenary practice were tarred, without evidence, with the same brush of journalistic compromise which F&M gladly admitted to.*

The facts are: 1) CGW has never agreed to feature any game on the cover in exchange for direct payment or, even implicitly, in exchange for advertising; 2) we are unaware of publications other than F&M which make this a practice; and 3) we don't even promise a favorable review to companies in exchange for the cover art, since even that could feasibly color a review.

It is even more important to clarify this since we have recently gone to a single piece of game artwork on each cover. We are very proud of the new look, but the facts haven't changed. Unfortunately, there may have been a different problem with our November cover. Apparently, a number of labels came unglued in the mail. If you did not receive November, we will gladly replace it.

Inadequate Coverage

I think you have the best computer gaming magazine on the market. It is so good that I don't feel it needs scantily clad females on the cover to attract attention. Let's leave the pin-ups to *Playboy* and stick to computer games. I would hate to have to cancel my new subscription because I am embarrassed to leave your magazine on my coffee table when my friends come over.

Thank you for many hours of entertainment,

William R. Lowry
Bremerton, WA



Broadswords & B[r]easts? Now, did you realize what you were doing?

Unsigned R.I.D. Card

Actually, we do stick to computer games. The artwork used on CGW's covers are taken directly from computer game packages. We don't deliberately choose art that is inappropriate to coffee tables. What we really look for is a hot game with good artwork that is likely to have significant distribution. Of course, the subliminal "r" implied in the September theme (i.e. Broadswords & Beasts) undoubtedly means that we'll be hearing from Jesse Helms.

Super Oversight

Why are there no super hero role playing games? There is nothing wrong with fantasy, but a change would be nice.

Mark Wilkerson
Austin, TX

Though there have been a number of "action games" based on superheroes (i.e. Batman: The Caped Crusader, Dr. Doom's Revenge *and* Superman*), it does seem that the idea of super hero role playing game on the computer has been neglected. It might be that there are so many different "super powers" (i.e. skills) that would have to be programmed in so many different ways that the programming challenge would cost more in terms of time, energy and cash than the projected market would bear. Then, again, maybe there's one in the offing that we have failed to uncover with our X-Ray vision.*

Sporting Views

Shouldn't *CGW* have a "Sports" category when rating the games? It seems sad to cram golf, hockey, football and baseball with *Hostage* and *Airborne Ranger*.

Actually, it would probably be confusing to have a separate sports category, since there are action games, strategy games and mixed genre games within that category. Currently, for example, NFL Challenge *is listed as a strategy game while* Jordan vs. Bird *is listed as an action game. They each compare better with the games in their respective categories than they would compare with each other in a separate "Sports" category. Where both action and strategy elements are present in a sports game, (i.e.* TV Sports Football, Wayne Gretzky Hockey, Jack Nicklaus' golf, *and* World Class Leader Board, *they are listed as both action and strategy games.*

The Ties That Bind

When are we going to see some binders for all those back issues that are stacked to the ceiling?

Roger Batchelder
Palm Bay, FL

The official Computer Gaming World *back issue binders are currently being manufactured. An official advertisement with full purchasing details will appear in our January issue. They look great and for those who are concerned, there are no scantily clad females on the cover.*

Ratings Game

Well, you don't have to do this, but maybe you could give a rating (e.g. graphics (1-10), playability (1-10), sound (1-10) etc.). Actually, the idea is pretty stupid, so scrap it.

Cedric Lo
Vancouver, British Columbia

Actually, the idea isn't stupid. It would be useful information. Unfortunately, the more complicated a survey process becomes, the less actual responses it tends to garner. Since we want as many responses as possible, we'll try to keep it simple. Actually, answering this letter is pretty stupid, so let's forget it.

On the R.I.D. card provided opposite page 4, please rate the following games (if you have played them) and articles (if you have read them) by using a letter grade scale (I.e. A to F). Just rate the games as if you were an educator. As with the world of education, the scale will translate to:

A= Excellent

B= Above Average

C= Average

D= Below Average

F= Failure

If you wish, you may assign pluses (+) or minuses (-) to your letter grade (i.e. B+, B-, C+, C-, etc.). As always, rate only those games that you have played.

Remember that thousands of gamers will be making buying decisions based on the results of these ratings, so help your fellow gamer out and let him know what is a worthy purchase and what is not.

Demographics

(List the appropriate number)

1. What is your age ?

1 = Under 14 years old
2 = 14-17 years old
3 = 18-20 years old
4 = 21-30 years old
5 = 31-35 years old
6 = 36-40 years old
7 = 41-50 years old
8 = 51+ years old

2. What machine(s) do you play games on?

(List all numbers that apply. List the machine you use most often first, the others in descending order of use).

1 = IBM, clones, Tandy
2 = Amiga
3 = Apple 8 bit
4 = Apple IIgs
5 = Atari ST
6 = Atari 8 bit
7 = C-64/128
8 = Macintosh
9 = Other (specify)

3. How much time do you typically spend playing computer games each week?

1 = Less than 2 hours
2 = 2-5 hours
3 = 6-10 hours
4 = 11-20 hours
5 = 21-30 hours
6 = 31+ hours

RID #63 Questions

Games

4. F-19 Stealth Fighter (Microprose)
5. Sim City (Maxis)
6. Red Storm Rising (Microprose)
7. Battlehawks 1942 (Lucasfilm)
8. Lords of Rising Sun (Cinemaware)
9. Wasteland (Electronic Arts)
10. Overrun (SSI)
11. Curse of Azure Bonds (SSI)
12. Pool of Radiance (SSI)
13. Ultima V (Origin)
14. Neuromancer (Interplay)
15. Star Saga 2 (Masterplay)
16. Wayne Gretzky Hockey (Bethesda)
17. Lakers vs. Celtics (EA)
18. Sword of Aragon (SSI)
19. Dragon Wars (Interplay)
20. F-15 Strike Eagle II (Microprose)
21. Halls of Montezuma (SSG)
22. Omega (Origin)
23. Star Fleet II (Interstel)
24. Starflight 2 (EA)
25. Cribbage King/Gin King (Software Toolworks)
26. Don't Go Alone (Accolade)
27. MechWarrior (Activision)
28. White Death (Command Simulations)
29. M-1 Tank Platoon (Microprose)
30. Playmaker Football (Broderbund)
31. Their Finest Hour (Lucasfilm)
32. A-10 Tank Killer (Dynamix)
33. Mean Streets (Access)
34. David Wolf, Secret Agent (Dynamix)
35. Kriegsmarine (SimCan)
36. Manhunter 2: San Francisco (Sierra)
37. Mines of Titan (Infocom)
38. TV Sports Football (Cinemaware)
39. Hero's Quest (Sierra)
40. Leisure Suit Larry II (Sierra)

Articles

41. M-1 Tank Platoon Review
42. Midway Review
43. Starflight 2 Sneak Preview
44. MechWarrior Sneak Preview
45. Dragon Wars Review
46. UFO Review
47. Letters
48. Murder Club Review
49. Prince of Persia Review
50. Inside The Industry

Questions

51. (If you use an IBM compatible machine, please answer the following question with a "Yes" or "No".) Does your computer read high density disks?

52. (If you use an IBM compatible machine, please answer the following question with a "Yes" or "No".) Do you own a mouse for your MS-DOS machine?

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It was heralded as being ". . . a science fiction fan's dream." — Computer Gaming World

It was said that "With products like *Breach*, wargamers begin to see what the new, sophisticated machines can do." — Computer Gaming World

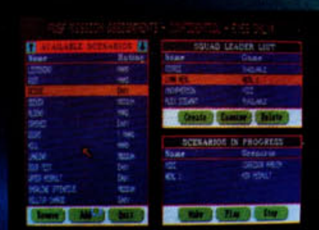
Now, Omnitrend Software releases the next generation step in advanced role-playing combat, **Breach 2**.



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